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*For the Sisters
from the Author.*

RHYMED PLEA
FOR
T O L E R A N C E .

In Two Dialogues.

WITH A PREFATORY DIALOGUE.

BY
JOHN KENYON.

“ He allowed others to differ from him even in opinions that were very dear to him, and, provided men did but fear God and work righteousness, he loved them heartily, how distant soever from him in judgment about things less necessary; in all which he is very worthy to be a pattern to men of all persuasions.”

ARCHBISHOP TILLOTSON.



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TO HIS BROTHER,
EDWARD KENYON,

FROM FEELING AND FROM REFLECTION A LOVER OF TOLERANCE,

These Verses

ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED,

BY THE AUTHOR.

P R E F A C E.

THESE verses—the author does not venture to call them poetry—will probably be referred to the class of satire. They contain, however, no names of living persons, (none at least for sneer or blame,) and no intended personal allusions whatsoever. They, who in satiric verses insist on such matter, will disapprove them accordingly,

In proportion to his ability, the writer has been anxious to inculcate principles, and more especially that one of a full religious tolerance. And by this word he would not imply any mere toleration, either legal or (what is termed) practical; the one, too often, cold, spiritless, a dead letter; the other, given or withheld at every private will. But that inward charity which, where any toleration is to exist, ought to be its chief motive force;

not, in short, an effect, but a cause ; not an expediency, but a duty. Such a tolerance he would desire to see imbibed, almost an instinct, on the mother's lap ; and made afterwards a bounden lesson, in schools and colleges ; bearing fruit indeed in our statute books and church offices, but with its root in men's hearts.

Thus began the Preface to the first edition of this little volume. That edition having been for some time exhausted, but almost entirely (it is honest to say) through private distribution, this second is printed with some modifications and some additions.

The writer is daily more and more convinced that the cause, for which he pleads, is that of Humanity and Justice, of Moral Truth, and of all Righteous Religion ; and if we descend to lower motives, of a Shrewd Practical Policy—not less. And believing that, in such a cause, even moderate powers may rightfully aspire to be useful, he casts his little book upon the waters, once again.

ARGUMENT TO PREFATORY DIALOGUE.

THE CLEAR SENSE AND TEMPERED FANCY OF POPE AND DRYDEN CONTRASTED
WITH THE DISTEMPRED FANCY AND THE VAGUENESS OF LATER WRITERS.
THEIR SATIRE MIGHT BE USEFUL AS CORRECTIVE OF SUCH FAULTS. THENCE
GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS ON SATIRIC WRITING, ITS ABUSES AND USES,
AND LIMITATIONS, AND DEFICIENCIES. DRYDEN. POPE. CHURCHILL. COWPER.
THE OCCASIONAL COARSENESS AND HARSHNESS OF SATIRIC WRITERS TO BE
EXCUSED, AND WHEREFORE. SUPERIOR MINDS—THEIR POWERS AND PRI-
VILEGES. GROWTH OF A YOUNG MIND. READING DURING BOYHOOD—DR.
WATTS—GRAY—POPE'S HOMER—SHAKESPEARE—DRYDEN—MILTON. LITERARY
AMBITION—HOW IT ACTS ON YOUNG MINDS—ITS TEMPTATIONS, AND DE-
SPONDENCIES, AND DISAPPOINTMENTS. FAME, EVEN IF ACQUIRED, HOW
LITTLE PERMANENT. CONCLUSION.

RHYMED PLEA FOR TOLERANCE.

PREFATORY DIALOGUE.



"Sunt certi denique fines."—HORAT.



A.—YES, I confess, I do regret the times
When Pope and Dryden knit their manly rhymes ;
When Sense, to Fancy near, like light and shade
Each chasing each, their due succession made ;
Or, wisely intermingled, wrought to view
Some master-work, not brilliant more than true.

That sister-reign is o'er ; and, Queen sublime,
Fancy alone now rules each realm of rhyme ;

And too fastidious direct to borrow
From human heart its homely joy or sorrow,
Distils her loves and hatreds, smiles and tears
From flowers and moon-beams, clouds and gossamers,
And fierce by turns or languishingly fine,
Burns, shivers, sobs and throbs through every line.

On as I read, what marvel, if perplext—
Now by half phrases, now half meanings vext ;
Now by descriptions tired, that find no close,
Now strained by unimaginable woes ;
'Mid flickering lights, to no one focus brought ;
'Mid mirage mists, still baffling thirsty thought ;
And nightmare fantasies from drowsy grot,
And far similitudes that liken not ;
Where, style and story, all is wild or dim
As Pythian oracle or Orphic hymn ;
What marvel if my wondering spirit seem
To drift amid the fragments of a dream,
And mocked by moony mysteries all too long,
Crave the clear sense of Pope's and Dryden's song.

Ye, thus who write in spite of critic law,
How had their satire kept your freaks in awe !
And, to sole sway controlling her pretence,
Bound Fancy down to compromise with Sense !

B.—Nay, call not up your satirists,—railers all,
From Gifford downward up to Juvenal.

A.—'Tis true, of all that ink satiric page,
Few dip the pen from purely virtuous rage.
'Tis true, each stroke erased, not honest quite,
And blackened leaves not few must turn to white :
Gone with the trash of many a blockhead's brains,
And perished, too, some else immortal strains.

Fond of the frail applause that waits on wit,
Curio deals right and left each reckless hit ;
Dines at their board, then sketches, to the life,
His simple neighbour or his neighbour's wife ;
Nay, should the need be pressing, without ruth,
To win a smile will gently wrest a truth.

Yet deem not Curio cruel. Merely gay
He wounds, like gamesome tiger, all in play.
And what, if once he broke an honest heart,
Wit stands his bail—it was but pride of art.
Keen surgeons thus, where milder means might heal,
Will sometimes fly, too fondly, to the steel.
Thus idle sportsmen, over-proud to kill,
Will maim and murder, just to show their skill.

Stern Milo never strove to raise a smile ;
Satire with him is but a vent for bile.
Fretful of stomach and of soul severe,
The vice he marks, and paints it broad and clear :
So broad, so clear, that his unblushing text
Mends not the present age, and taints the next.

The dilettanti these. Then comes the trade,
With portraits drawn and fitted, ready made ;
Prepared, as hunger prompts them, or the metre,
To hang on hapless James or fated Peter.

Some clothe their subjects all in masquerade,
Like great incognitos thence more displayed :
From Rome or Greece the gauzy drapery bring,
Then wink and whisper, " Nero means the king."

Pimp of the soul, this tickles prurient ears,
Resistless bait, with living characters ;
Ambiguous facts gleans up, nor one rejects—
All he half knows, and all but half suspects ;
Then o'er each page his nauseous notes he throws,
And tastes, for verse too dull, provokes with prose.
So mountebanks, who know their craft full well,
Loose jests hitch in to bid their poisons sell ;
The crowd corrupt flock round with eager eyes,
And buy at once their nostrums, and despise.

Sage Furio's deeper speculating quill
A nephew's name rhymed from his uncle's will ;
Then changed, like serpent's skin, the satirist's tone,
Wound round that uncle, and rhymed in his own.

Not Boileau knew with subtler art to raise
On satire's ground adroit relief of praise ;
Boileau, who swooped on every feebler thing,
But tamed his beak in flattery for a king.

These are the vile—but his a viler part,
Who makes his prey some woman's breaking heart,
And pours on penitence his caustic in,
Till the scared frailty hardens into sin.
Or, if the better nature, somewhat nice,
Though dropt to frailty, yet revolt at vice,
And, deeply sorrowing and repenting deep,
Cling to the pardon meant for those that weep ;
Each day to some atoning duty given,
Yet deeming all she may too scant for heaven ;
Still, not the less, around her home forlorn,
Whirls he the unpitying blast of public scorn,
Till wrecked She sink beneath the driving gale,
Like some unsheltered flow'ret, meek and pale,
That, meant for warmer suns and gentler skies,
Hangs its dejected head, and pines, and dies.

Oh ! deem for such I hold a scorn like thine—
 Better than this the workshop, or the mine—
 Or rag-man's trade, or scavenger's, obscene—
 A toil more innocent, and quite as clean.

But when, more strong than pulpit and than laws,
 Satire her voice uplifts in virtue's cause,
 —Stern as the clang from Joshua's trumpet blown,
 When the stout walls of Jericho crashed down—
 That powerful voice I hail in honest trust,
 Join in the fray and vaunt our quarrel just.
 With joy I see, beneath the withering blast,
 Forth from their holds the conscious vices haste ;
 Follies and coxcombries their stations yield,
 And many a bluff pretension quit the field ;
 While, 'mid the scared and scampering herds of flight,
 Virtue stands firm, and smiles in temperate might.

B.—Thus exercised, e'en I her power revere—

A.—And what though Satire, sometimes too austere,

With reckless onset, whirl away together
Guilt's braving plume, and Folly's harmless feather,
They, who on public stage uncalled appear,
Must take the fortune of the theatre.

And, though I ne'er would grant the searching knife
To probe the trembling quick of private life,
Some wife's, some sister's gentle heart to strain,
The good uncertain, but assured the pain ;
Yet still, if so it chance, on private ground,
(Such weeds on virtue's soil are often found)
Some happy folly show its smirking pride,
Too gaily tempting to be passed aside ;
Some butt legitimate for gamesome wit ;
Why—we must sketch the trifler—bid him sit.

Yet here let satire veil with quaint disguise,
And, while our mirth she tickles, cheat our eyes—
Throw in a whisker—hide a blotch that shows—
And, if not yet be-purpled, tint the nose ;
That, while “ the sketch is nature,” all agree,
Nor friend nor foe shall whisper, “ This is he.”

Yet, I re-echo, when by shame unawed,
 Some bold intruding villain stalks abroad—
 Honour and right who counts as things of straw,
 Evading, or perhaps above, the law ;
 Some prætor knave, half India in his purse,
 Some royal favourite, a nation's curse ;
 Who not content to pamper vice, his own,
 Crawls to his Prince's ear and taints the throne ;
 Some statesman, chafed at liberty's least word,
 Whose will would change the pandects for the sword ;
 Some patriot, reckless the mad crowd to drive
 On danger's brink, if he thenceforth may thrive ;
 Some muck-worm prelate, earthly gains made sure,
 Who leaves a bloated million from the poor ;
 Some title-hunting judge, whose slanting sight
 Can meanly blink a wrong, or wrest a right,
 Shifting th' unsteady scales from hour to hour,
 Or crushing freedom with the mace of power ;
 Him (and that worst corruption as I name,
 The kindling passion almost bursts to flame) —
 Him let the verse with eager hate pursue,
 Till seized, and bound, and dragged to public view,

Beneath the well-earned scourge he writhe at length,
And own that Satire hath her hour of strength.

Truth — justice — freedom — these are your's — are
mine ;

These to no power unquestion'd we resign ;
These who invades, or rich, or learn'd, or high,
His meet reward, drinks satire's chalice dry.

'Twas thus of old, when plague his arrows sped—
(Of moral plagues we have our store instead—)
Thy lazarets, fair Venice, could confine
The noblest, proudest, of each ancient line ;
Great names, for whom immortal Titian wrought,
And gave to time each beaming brow of thought ;
Yet stern o'er these the state-physician stood,
And stoutly drenched them for the public good.

B.—So be it. For the guilty, great or rich,
Her cup let satire, conscience have her twitch.

A.—Yet rank, with crime though stained, hath many
a charm

Satire to soothe, nay, conscience to disarm.
Where, chafing at the bold affront, he sits,
Levéc'd by hungry knaves and fawning wits,
See venal Eloquence—oh ! task unmeet—
Cull fairest flowers and strew them at his feet. ·
See Poesy, that plies a shameless trade,
A prostitute in vestal robes arrayed,
For him her lyre attune, and wreath her bays,
And brim, with Hebe smile, her cup of praise,
Whose lulling draught, like oil to waves applied,
Steals o'er each rising throb of guilt and pride.

“Gold too, thou puissant lord where'er we roam,
Yet Britons find thee powerful most at home ;
Standard with us of manners and of worth,
Far more than virtue—rival e'en of birth.
On every rank though now this rule be prest,
“Rise if thou canst—keep sternly down the rest,”
E'en where frore coteries their ice oppose,
Thy ray can pierce, dissolving as it goes ;

Slides through saloons for proud Precedence built,
And glints its softening hues on vulgarest guilt.
PeePs forth some stigma, wresting Honour's groan,
" True, 'tis a blotch, yet such as friend may own."
But where the Pylades who dares to note
With recognition frank a threadbare coat ?

B.—Thus guarded, why attempt the rich—the great?
Let the muse pause, admonish'd ere too late,
Ere yet, suspended by a single thread,
Stern " ex officio " tremble o'er her head.
Let learning, talent, weep o'er Wakefield's tomb,
Share thou the grief, but shun the kindred doom.

A.—True ! some have made a quarry of a king,
But found a minister a dangerous thing ;
Tenacious, sensitive, resentful more ;
While e'en the best are ticklish, if not sore.
'Twas thus when once a sprightly kid had dared
The lion's den, the generous despot spared,
But spared in vain.—He 'scaped the monarch's might,
To die beneath the snarling jackal's bite.

Yet laureate Dryden, in no sparing sort,
 Could lash, by turns, the people and the court.
 On glowing wheels the satire swept along,
 And no stern judge forbade the sounding song.

Pope followed next; by toil, by genius fit,
 To point the lightest dart of polished wit;
 To bend no less firm reason's bow of strength,
 And give the high-drawn arrow all its length;
 With art, to all beside himself denied,
 And such successful art that art to hide,
 His best aimed hit seemed but a casual glance,
 And labour's finished work th' effect of chance.
 His too a sportive scorn—the happy mean
 Satire's fierce frown and ribald jest between—
 A tempered vein: yet feared not less by all,
 The court, the town, the senate and the hall.
 Him still untired successive lustres saw,
 Yet on he wrote, and all unscathed by law.

Churchill, e'en him, the eloquent, the coarse,
 The gifted spendthrift, profligate of force,

Spirit and power to scorn, degrade, belie,—
Even him the Dracos of his day passed by.
Statesmen of purer then, or hardier frame,
Or shunned the vice, or stoutly dared the blame.
Our prudish age, more sensitively nice,
Starts from the blame and merely hugs the vice.

B.—Yet these, your wits, oft leapt the boundary line,
The manor right, which conscience must define.
E'en when from sportive mood the chase arose,
Hatred too oft came mangling at the close.

A.—Yet one there was who spurned the lawless taint—
Monster, how rare ! The poet and the saint !
Cowper—who, keen and free to choose his ground,
Still made the fence of truth his satire's bound ;
Winged lighter follies with no rancorous aim,
And when he smote a vice, yet spared the name.

So still be Satire's chemistry refined,
Her sane drawn forth, mere acrid left behind.

Nay, when, perchance, some glowing guilt may seem
 Justly to claim her penalty extreme,
 Yet, let her think how oft th' envenomed blame
 Of falsehood's tongue hath scarred some noblest name,
 And, check'd awhile, suspend the bitter cup,
 Lest Socrates himself should drain it up.

Nor turn away, e'en when hard words she use,
 Nor always quite refined, our Moral Muse.
 If busied oft amid the worthless brood,
 Her best-loved themes are still the wise and good ;
 And strained, betimes, to weave satiric lays,
 She strikes her favourite lyre to virtue's praise.

Just so, within that loathsome prison gate,
 'Mid guilt and crime, and ribald laugh and hate,
 Yon female Saint, with steadfast footstep, moves,
 And bears the ill, because the good she loves ;
 Untainted walks amid that tainted leaven,
 Sees earth's worst part, and communes still with heaven.

And thou, my Master-Bard, to whom belong
The heights, at once, of satire and sweet song ;
Whom, as I read, my humbled hopes incline
Still but to read, and blot each verse of mine ;
Though in thy strain harsh notes erewhile prevail,
“ Sporus at court, or Japhet in a jail ;”
Yet, led by thee, what purest thoughts engage !
With thee I rock a mother’s cradled age,
Or following Harley to his dungeon cell,
“ When the last lingering friend hath bade farewell,”
There learn, contemptuous of all meaner fame,
That poesy and virtue are the same.

B.—So stout your plea—almost I deem that You,
In nature’s spite, would join the scribbling crew.

A.—Ironic, flout not thus the race sublime,
Founders of souls—immortal heirs of time ;
When laws are changed, when dynasties are gone,
Names that shall live transcendent and alone.

When ruin drives, as ruin oft hath driven,
 O'er realms, the favoured realms long deemed of heaven ;
 Thy peopled shores, my more than native land,
 (Far be the day) like Tyre's, a desert strand ;
 Yet then—if prophet thought unscorned may press
 Through time's far scope, nor faint beneath the stress—
 O'er southern isles, now struggling from the deep,
 When busy sounds of population sweep,
 To dusky tribes shall these their power impart,
 And of new clustering nations build the heart ;
 While coral reefs, where now but sea-birds throng,
 Learn Bacon's sense and echo Milton's song.

Proud lot is his, whose comprehensive soul,
 Keen for the parts, capacious for the whole,
 Thought's mingled hues can separate, dark from bright,
 Like the fine lens that sifts the solar light ;
 Then recompose again th' harmonious rays,
 And pour them powerful in collected blaze—
 Wakening, where'er they glance, creations new,
 In beauty steeped, nor less to nature true ;

With eloquence that hurls from reason's throne
A voice of might, or pleads in pity's tone ;
To agitate, to melt, to win, to soothe,
Yet kindling ever on the side of truth ;
Or swerved, by no base interest warped awry,
But erring in his heart's deep fervency ;
Genius for him asserts the unthwarted claim,
With these to mate—the sacred Few of fame—
Explore, like them, new regions for mankind,
And leave, like theirs, a deathless name behind.

But ne'er for me 'twas meant, with daring prow,
To cleave wide oceans, unexplored till now ;
And having gained some yet sea-shrouded clime,
Scale with intrepid foot its cliffs sublime ;
Then point to some untravell'd upland's brow,
Or green savannah, sweetly spread below ;
Or gaily plunging thro' some new found glade,
Invite the rest “ to choice of sun and shade ;”
Strange stream to track, refreshing unnam'd flowers,
Of sweeter scent, or brighter hue than ours ;

Or taste the fruit, yet plucked by none but me,
 Or the wild honey, spoil of forest bee.
 Enough for me, to whom benignant heaven,
 That still dooms best, far humbler lot hath given ;
 Enough for me, remote from tracks of praise,
 To stray through well-known fields by trodden ways ;
 Musing of things, tho' neither new nor deep,
 Well pleased to smile, and not too cold to weep ;
 Content, tho' conscious of no lofty call,
 And if not high, thence fearless of a fall.

Yet in our Carib isle, young Savage yet,
 —My earliest playmates of the race of jét ;
 With whom, unclad, I crawled or climbed at will,
 And loved them then—and love in memory still ;
 There, if some palm-tree, to my wondering sight,
 Strained up aloft—as seemed to infinite ;
 Or, flung from thunder-cloud, down-clashing rain
 Smote the live rock, then upward steamed amain ;
 —Or when some day of languid heat was done,
 And woke the land-breeze to the setting sun,

Wafting, how sweet ! its perfumed snatches by,

From citrons or ananas clustering nigh ;

Or from that garden-nook, with flowers o'ercrept—

My Mother's grave—the first o'er which I wept,

(For so in that fair isle our 'Parted slept ;)

Or when from forth night's darkly blue expanse

Bright tropic stars by myriads met my glance,

Or countless fire-flies, frisking as in mirth,

Twinkled along—my little stars of earth ;

All these, if fancy cheat not, breathed for me—

Young Savage yet—their silent poesy.

But when, o'er years, as yet of lore quite scant,

Uprose the horn-book—Glorious Visitant !

The Muses came with that expanding day,

First pious Watts, then—strange transition—Gray !

A chance-found book ! Oh ! how I loved to read

Of kingly Odin and the coal-black steed—

The gory shuttle, tossed from hand to hand,

And all the mysteries of that Runic land.

Still 'mid the depths my childish thought was drown'd,

But when the sense I miss'd I hung upon the sound.

The Sacred Volume, too, in that fond time,
Would stir me with its Beauteous or Sublime ;
Yet pictures more than precepts : for each age
Culls its own lore from that all-pregnant page.
There novice Childhood pores with curious eye,
There learns the Man—to live, the Sire—to die.

Then every image won, where all was new,
And more to win, the Wondrous was the True ;
The stork, who knows th' appointed hour at hand ;
The turtle heard soft murmuring thro' the land ;
Ships that to Ophir or to Tarshish sail ;
Leviathan—Behemoth—mighty Whale !
Then too the Cherubim and sword of flame,
And Red Sea rushing round as Egypt came,
And Burning Bush, and that dread issuing Voice,
With fearful joy—all bade my heart rejoice,
And then, as now, I thrilled beneath Prose speech
Of loftier power than Verse shall ever reach.

Next he, the lord of each upgrowing mind,
Poet and legislator of mankind,

Next Homer came—as yet, not He of Greek,
But Homer, such as Pope had made him speak.
What vows were straight for every hero sped,
The while, as temper willed, or fancy led,
We parted, like Scamander's branching tide,
This to the Grecian, this the Trojan side ;
Then with mock sword, and slate, our mimic shield,
Hector or Ajax, overfought each field !

E'en now, when years their dawning tints of rose
Have lost, and hopes, like flowers, are fain to close ;
E'en now I feel o'er life's descending hour
Steal back those joys with recollected power ;
My school-boy days around me group anew,
And the heart's witness vouches Rogers true !

Thee, Shakspeare, half might memory overlook,
For thou to me wert Nature more than Book.
To thee my days, my nights, I loved to give,
Nor seemed, the while, so much to read—as live.

A further day maturer pleasures brought,
Yet Feeling still was powerful over Thought ;
Then proud I heard the pomp of Dryden roll,
And humbly dared to measure Milton's soul.

Thus years trod upward, till the impatient mind
Stood on the verge of manhood unconfined ;
A World beneath at will, and Alps sublime
Sparkling afar, a very bliss to climb ;
And Pleasures then were an uncounted Sum,
And Being—but a Poesy to come.

Nay, I confess, in those tumultuous hours
When future life seemed glory all or flowers,
Yet to myself unknown—then who can blame?—
I 'scaped not quite the Calenture of Fame.

As one who sails with some long-lingering fleet,
Till his brain fevers with the tropic heat,
In the green hue that clothes the barren seas,
Views his own native fields, his village trees ;

Vision or truth in vain he questions o'er,
The strong delusion gains him more and more ;
Till down he dashes 'mid the ravening foam,
And the wave closes o'er his dream of home ;
So on my youth the strong temptation came,
The cheating view, the feverish thirst of fame.
To me her sterile waves, her storm-ridged sands,
Were thrifty meadows all or furrowed lands.
Long time I gazed, long ponder'd on the brink,
And all but took the headlong plunge—in ink.

B.—Temptation mad ! If such again allure,
And hellebore and blister fail of cure,
Why, let the critic lancet breathe a vein,
And free from folly at the expense of pain.

A.—Nor need. For, disenchanted now by truth,
Stand forth in real guise the dreams of youth.
Dicers I know them now in desperate game,
Mad jousters in the tournament of fame,
Where the too tempting prize though thousands miss,
Yet every rash adventurer deems it his.

—Mere doting usurers, their last guinea lent,
 E'en avarice dozed in dreams of cent. per cent.,
 Whom Hope, long Promiser that seldom pays,
 Cheats with post-obit bonds of distant praise.

Oh lettered life, for men of rich degree
 Soft cradle, rocking *them* to rickety,
 Thou art for Him—the unstivered Wretch—to whom
 Genius for curse was given—the treadmill's doom.
 He, while plump Publishers stand by and smile,
 Whirls endless on his still revolving mile,
 Sighs for his labour's end—sighs on—and dies the while! }

How blest are they to whom the immortal lyre
 Yields their full joy to listen and admire.
 What anxious hopes, what jealous fears arise,
 Ourselves the candidates and fame the prize.

The Student pale, with glory's passion fraught,
 To glory gives his daily, nightly thought ;
 Day following day, long week succeeding week,
 More strong his love, and paler grows his cheek,

While to that inner heart's consuming glow
The lofty Mistress still replies him "No."
Yet still lured on, tho' trembling for his pains,
When of ten blotted lines scarce one remains,
Of love, of fear, he knows each anxious turn,
Now fondly prizes, gladly now would burn :
Till blest, at length, in Bulmer's loveliest dress,
Proudly his babe he shows, his darling of the press.

But as, not seldom, o'er the peasant's field,
His children's bread, with hope, with rapture till'd,
Comes sudden blight to mar his fondest aim,—
So fares it with the toiling Serf of fame.
Too soon, on hurrying wings, or grey or blue,
Sweeps o'er his hopes the Demon of Review,
Casts on his babe an eye of evil power,
And withers all his greatness in an hour.
Struggles awhile the strong but shrinking pride,
The hapless frame with genius still allied,
Struggles awhile, in vain ; then, bending low,
Disdains, yet bows in anguish to the blow,

Spirits, I know, there are of steadfast force,
 With genius linked, steel-strung and yet not coarse,
 That proved, not worsted, in the Herculean thrall,
 Rise, like Antæus, stronger from the fall.
 But they, the most, whom weaker nerves sustain,
 Shrink, like the plant, instinctive from the pain ;
 And some, like Keats, heart-stricken overmuch,
 While the world sneer'd, have died beneath the
 touch.

Or grant, perchance, the splendid guerdon gained :
 Springs sorrow sudden on the good attained.
 The critic's jest though 'scaped, or truth severe,
 Yet comes the foe's loud laugh or silent sneer ;
 While every dunce would mar the hard-won fame,
 And mix his hisses with the world's acclaim.

Or if thy verse, in high poetic spasm,
 Hath stirred some unadvised enthusiasm ;
 Or calmlier-purposed, yet mean fears above,
 Roused from drugged sleep duty, or human love ;

Such love—such duty—as cold worldlings shun,
Or one, or both ; or both more oft in one ;
Then of those worldly tribes starts each thy foe,
The thoughtful wish derides—the impassioned glow,
And shouts it crime—to Teach—and guilt—to Know. }

Nor foes alone, nor dunces, shall combine ;—
E'en he, that earliest, best-loved friend of thine,
With whom thou brak'st the bread of trusting
truth,
Sheltering beneath tho sacred tents of youth ;
With him, so love had planned, through scenes to go
Of mingled pleasure or partaken woe ;
The last affections of the parting man
To close in fondness, as the boy's began :—
E'en he, at length, takes up the torturer's part,
With surer knowledge barbs the unthought-of dart,
Or drives the poniard right into the heart. }

But He for blighted hopes thus doomed to mourn,
And warmest friendship chilled with cold return,

And all too-conscious of the grief that stings,
 Or soothed awhile yet startled by the strings,
 Well may He shrink with touch of tuneful shell
 To rouse the slumberers from their silent cell.
 The long-loved lyre, that would renew his pains,
 He views in secret anguish and abstains,
 Like Zion's saddened harps, which willows bore
 Once struck with cheerful hand—now struck no more !

Monster of faith ! or should the friend forbear ;
 Should foes molest not, nay, should dunces spare ;
 Yet wait not less, to nip or prose, or rhyme,
 The silent blights, the sealing frosts of Time.
 Men fade like leaves ! Leaves, budded from the pen,—
 Forgive the equivoque,—fade fast as men.
 Fanned by hope's vernal breeze awhile they play,
 Or fondly flaunt in glory's summer ray ;
 But o'er their freshness steals th' unheeded year,
 Words change their hues, and very thought grows sere,
 'Till winter comes to rend each lingering name,
 And prove how few the evergreens of fame.

E'en Ye, majestic band, to whom I owe,
By turns, or lofty thrill, or pause from woe ;
E'en Ye, far-beaming lights from centuries past,
Or so despondence deems, shall fade at last.
O'er surging years, our arts—our arms that whelm,
Shall unborn races drift, or guide the helm,
Nor heed, perchance, amid their fate or care,
To ask of old Tradition what We were.
Then by that deluge sea, our destined grave,
Shall lonely Silence sit, and watch the wave,
Where of all glory's peaks, now proudly steep,
Scarce one lone Ararat shall spot the deep.

B.—Enough ! when talk thus allegoric grows,
Fain would I yawn, and wish it at a close.

A.—Then here we part. Yet end we here to
say,
This hand may ne'er presume to touch the bay.
For me more fit, at leisure laid along,
My days to cheat with charm of others' song,

And court in peace, nor mocked at nor admired,
Th' unpurchased duties of a life retired.
From guilt, from hate, as best I may, aloof ;
Too weak to cast, too shy to meet reproof ;
Yet proud, in Virtue's cause, faint voice to raise,
And be, for one brief hour, the thing I praise ;
Well pleased, meanwhile, to see once more commence
The reign of temperate Fancy, leagued with Sense ;
And, if the lash were plied with honest view,
Not much displeased that Sense were Satire too.

ARGUMENT TO DIALOGUE I.

CHRISTIAN CHARITY TOO LITTLE INCULCATED FROM THE PULPIT—COUNTERACTED BY LAWS. A MERELY PRUDENTIAL TOLERATION IS NOT TOLERANCE.—FORMAL RELIGION,—RELIGIOUS SOCIETIES AND MEETINGS,—VARIOUS SECTS, ALTHOUGH FOUND ACTING IN COMBINATION, ARE NOT THEREFORE, OF NECESSITY, TOLERANT. MOTIVES TO TOLERANCE, FROM INNER REASON—FROM OUTWARD ANALOGIES.—CALVIN,—ACTION OF INTOLERANCE AMONG OURSELVES. TIMES OF CHARLES THE FIRST—OF GEORGE THE SECOND—AND OF GEORGE THE THIRD.—WESLEY.—ACTION OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION ON ENGLISH RELIGIONISM.—BURKE. WORLDLY RELIGION, CLERIC AND LAIC, EXEMPLIFIED AND CONTRASTED. RECAPITULATION. CONCLUSION.

DIALOGUE I.

“ For the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”

2 Cor. iii. 6.

A.—THAT Preacher's strain I never could approve,
 Who, but in driblets, dwells on Christian Love;
 And when, in sooth, not wholly passing by,
 Seems not so much to teach, as not deny;
 Each controversial acre toils to till,
 But Charity lets sprout or die at will.

Yet the heart vents still more indignant blame,
 Where Lawgivers their sullen codes proclaim,
 And idly would constrain the creed within,
 As if Belief were Crime, and Tolerance—Sin.

And though, at length, our Senatorial Band,
 Reluctantly—with cold and grudging hand—

Hath loosed faith's sterner statutes—yet a few
Retained, for old misdeeds to gall the Jew—
Those sterner statutes Custom's iron pen,
Rased from the Books, writes deeply still on Men.

Hence we of Tolerance little yet may boast,
Stranger, too long, to Freedom's vaunted coast,
For here tho' bigot Pride *her* mild disguise
Full oft assume, entrapping who relies,
(Like that far-fabled wolf who first beguiled
With grandam-speech and then devoured the child)
Yet not the less a ready rod he rears
To smite—where safe—whom more he hates than
fears,
Nor slow, meanwhile, his own harsh heart to please
With that old unction, “I am not like These.”

Deeds, that *seem* Love's, drip oft from saving Sense,
And many a slow concession filters thence ;
But largest Prudence ne'er was Virtue's Whole,
Whose Love, a Spirit, gushes from the Soul ;

Presumes no rights—deals round no patron glance,
Nor Toleration is, but Tolerance.

B.—If gush Our Love in no strong jet that towers, }
To fall, refreshening round, in rainbow showers ; }
This praise, at least, accord us, “ Faith is Ours.” }

A.—Alone, where Faith and Tolerance combine,
Religion deigns to rear her genuine shrine ;
There finds companionship of kindred birth,
And then, as once the Angels, walks on earth.

And can I then but feel the deep offence,
When stern Intolerance leagued, and low Pretence,
In that pure fane, with foul intrusion, nest,
And crush her births—the loveliest and the best !

Such tax Religion pays—her glory’s price—
Her style usurped by every masquing Vice.
Pebbles—though bright—fraud takes small heed to them,
But every rogue would counterfeit the gem.

B.—Nay now beware.

A.—Of all the wraths that burst,
A Saint's, unsainted, is, I know, the worst ;
To lash the dire offence at once they turn,
And still, when conscious most, most fiercely burn.
But if the just reproof—your harder fate—
For plaint no room allow, nor open hate ;
Each to his den, like venom'd adders crept,
Watchful the while, but moveless as they slept,
Some dark reprisal, there, they brood and hatch,
With deep low cunning, wisdom's overmatch,
And closely-guarded look and guarded word,
All smooth ! aye, smoother than the smoothest sword !
Oh ! thou, believe them never. If they swear,
Look to thyself, and still the more beware ;
For he, who listens, walks, in treacherous trust,
O'er burning lava, and a fragile crust.

And hapless He, o'er whom with hanging weight
Broods silently a theologic hate.

In his simplicity he fears no shock,
So calm, so very moveless seems the rock.
But soon he feels, by stroke alone made known,
The sliding avalanche of slippery stone ;
Then lies, an unsuspecting victim, low,
For 'twas from treacherous stillness came the blow.

B.—Then wherefore speak ?

A.—Yet why should I be mute ?

If right, allow me—or if wrong, refute,
And own that where Intolerance wakes the offence,
The verse that smites her is but self defence.
And what smooth doctrine wins us to applaud,
Where interest hints the gain, a pious fraud ?
What schoolman's logic strains us to confess
A lie may suit with honest purposes ?
For us ; who flowers in honour's path would strew,
Nor much averse " to give the Devil his due,"
We still will hold it shame and bitter ruth,
Where interest-minted falsehoods pass for truth.

And lo !—a church now beards each brothel door,
Yet Vice lives on as sensual as before.
To each its votaries throng and plight their troth,
And one same congregation serves for both.

For loitering worshipper small space allowed,
Now gasping aisles scarce hold the Sunday crowd.
Yet let thine eye pursue—God's service o'er—
Each solemn group through home's re-opening
door ;

There mark how soon the world resumes its place,
And earthly lusts rush in on heavenly grace.
See caustic slander there, see sneering craft
Mix up for thirsty hate some well-spiced draught ;
Which lips, just reverent from the sacred cup,
Shall welcome with keen smile and drain it up.

Such, oft, is faith. A pageant but for gaze,
A gold-fringed drapery, kept for public days :
Which to a closet, for the most, we trust,
And, but for sabbath service cleanse from dust !

As pilgrims, whose devotions else might faint,
Will worship oft the image for the saint ;
As grasping misers come, ere long, to prize
Gold for itself, yet more than what it buys ;
Thus—soon—the soul to mere external leans,
High ends forgets, and meanly dotes on means ;
And, as in Social, so in Sacred, clings
Not to the Spirit, but the Forms of things ;
Prims outward feature for the grace within,
Puts on the sackcloth, not throws off the sin ;
Earth views and skies, nor worships at the view ;
But, once a week, prays stoutly in a pew.
Just sees, just feels, as Custom shifts the prism,
And—born a Spirit—dies—a Formalism.

Might'st thou, e'en thou, most wise and holy Paul !
Quit, for brief season, heaven's eternal hall,
And for mere Saint made known—nor more—nor less,
Just prove our thresholds, in some simple dress,
With locks ill shorn, and labour-hardened skin,
I know not house polite would let thee in ;

Nor, spite of all those glorious gifts of thine,
What bishop's civil wife would ask to dine.

But though Devotion's shows, probed more and
more,

Might still be found more hollow at the core ;
Belief, not Practice, prized at highest rate,
Barren Belief, or fruitful most in Hate ;
Yet, as each Age, of cheerfulness or gloom,
On its own pilgrims dons its own costume ;
As Guilds, whate'er the individual man,
Wear all one cloak—the livery of the clan ;
So universal Britain now—no less,
Her motley motives shrouds in “ Godliness,”
—As smugglers clap run goods beneath a pall—
And that mere skin-deep covering serves for all.

And yet my friend, by no irreverence stirr'd,
Nor mocking “ Godliness,” I name that word !
Paul's word, no doubt, when, with uplifted hand,
He taught at Athens, 'mid the Gentile band ;

Or when, in Judah, 'gainst her ancient yoke
He strove, and Felix trembled as he spoke.

But "Godliness" then told of faith and love,
Mild Duties here, and holiest Hopes above ;
Now some mere thought of Ritual import brings :
Things change with Times and Meanings change with
Things.

Some flashy hand-bill spreads the news of grace,
"To-day, a Mission Meeting will have place."
Prompt at the call, pure Faith, Pretence, and Sin,
Interest and Fear, strange medley, all rush in ;
There pious Hope, there wide expanding Love
Join in one prayer, to speed the herald dove ;
There, too, each scheming son of Trade attends,
This, keen to gain—this, fearing loss of, friends ;
Poor Cliens owns such summons sad for him,
Still he must fail not,—'tis my Lady's whim ;
The village Galen, groaning inwardly,
Contributes there, perforce, his hard-earn'd fee ;

Glad Sectaries profit by the occasion lent,
To waft o'er distant fields the dear Dissent ;
There too the Rector's glebe its produce pours,
Seed for new church on far Australian shores ;
Which, so he deems, to future tithe shall grow,
While Deans expand and purple Bishops blow.
The Borough Member too must join the tribe,
For speech, well timed, may save a costlier bribe ;
There too his Lordship comes—perhaps a prank ?
Not so—the chair, 'tis thought, befits his rank ;
And, Ascot o'er, play slack at every hell,
“The thing seems proper,” and “He might as well.”

Love-feast is this, where brother links with brother ;
Or Gamester Club, where each would pluck the other ?

B.—Yet, in one Bark and pledged one Course to steer,
These must be Tolerant, if not quite Sincere.

A.—Creeds—inward—outward—Doctrine of old sects,
Philosophy hath borne, but Heaven rejects.

God scarce may yield the Conscience thus to trim ;
Mixed motives are for Man ; the one for Him.
Though worldly shrewdness worldly work may do,
He loves alone the simple and the true.

Nay more. As kings, who cling to right divine,
Freedom to crush, though jealous, yet combine ;
So these, though differing each, all join to assail
Who rashly dares to stand without their pale.
Nor him avails on Truth, for aid, to call,
Nor, Samson-like, assay to shake their wall ;
That shaken wall, if chance so far he win,
Shall, with its block and rubble, overwhelm him in.

B.—Though Falsehood thus may cowl opinion in,
Or timid Prudence veil, to falsehood kin,
Frankness shall dare a course direct to steer ;
We make—ourselves—the Spectres which we fear.

A.—So dreams the Youth.—Age dreads the tongue
may slip,
And presses close the finger on the lip ;

And pondering what the cunning Frenchman said,
"That truths there are to show and truths to shade,"
Tames to meek mien avowal's earlier pride,
And e'en from Friendship's ear submits to hide.

Hence warmth, nor honest doubt, is licensed here ;
With hypocrites e'on silence is a sneer.
Frankness himself they strain, through fear, to aid,
Unwilling partner in the dirty trade.
For touch the mystery these their rites enclose,
Hint, or but look, what each in secret knows ;
And, "Drug the bowl," they shout ; "Prepare the
rods,"
"For he, like Socrates, denies the gods !"

Teacher of Truth, be this thy gracious charter,
To live imprisoned, or to die a martyr.
This lore each ago hath learned—or old or new—
Derived aliko from Christian and from Jew.
Hence thou, Geologist, take timely heed,
Nor let a quarry quarrel with a creed.

Truth may lie, fossil, in some cave, no doubt;
But 'twere a mad success to win her out;
For ere Thou lead, or She come safely forth,
Astræa must return once more to earth.

Rapt to some peak, or trailing on the ground,
For each how various Faith's horizon bound;
Yet, far as Soul Sincere is virtue's test,
What truly each perceives, for each is best.
Let Knowledge upward win from view to view,
But drag not—strain not with Procrustian screw.

B.—Duty, you grant, must rise in truth's defence.

A.—But Duty, oft, is Temper's mere pretence;
And ne'er is soul so deftly swayed to evil,
As when, in guise of Conscience, tempts the Devil.
—And if a heart be found, which rarely plies
To the fond need of human sympathies,
'Tis there Intolerance loves to fix her place,
Proud, as old Stylite, of her narrow base,

And wider worship views with aspect sour,
And crooks and more contracts from hour to hour.

B.—But Certainties, we hold, should doubt exclude—

A.—'Twixt sect and sect, yet where the Certitude?
For very truth their dogmas all profess,
And who may dare decide 'twixt guess and guess?
Or every shifting shade perceive or say,
Which parts, not black from white, but grey from grey?
Various our means, one same our right to scan,
The judgment is for God, and not for Man;
And if that judgment of the all-seeing Throne—
No thought may dare, yet Tolerance is our own.

B.—But judge we must.

A.—Then let no blinding pride
Of dogmatism, but mild heart decide.
Where his own Wisdom bounds his Mercy's store,
The veriest Sage in charity is poor.

Perchance, who doomed us thus to disagree,
Planned this arena for our charity ;
For beauteous end, bade Virtue—Weakness—join,
And turns our freedom's self to discipline.
By many a step we mount Heaven's awful stair,
And Love fits here, as Knowledge waits us there.

If e'er some slight misgiving thou should'st know
Of present creed—for thought will ebb and flow—
Straight, from thyself, the passing lesson take,
And spare another's for thine own mind's sake.
Faith, vowed unchangeable, may win Thee sorrow,
When Light—to-day—appears less Light—to-morrow.

But if thine own peculiar faith be fixed,
Yet earth is fully wide for creeds commixed.
Or, grant, that all must fuse to one consent,
Love more hath won than ever argument.
Nor need thine argument be rasping file ;
Pour forth the milk of reason, not its bile ;

Nay, if by foe ungentle scorn be shown,
Bear his Intolerance and chain down thine own.

As Poles Magnetic, like the like, repel,
So harsh with harsh refuses still to dwell ;
But, proved with wiser gentleness aright,
Veers gladly round to greet its opposite ;
Clasps, with a trembling joy, the new found heart,
Turns, as it turns, and clings and dreads to part.

Hence Church, which votaries would retain, when won,
Of hard, unsocial creed the taint should shun.
Exclusive dogmas train the heart to Pride,
Pride, bent on power, picks quarrel to divide ;
And—lordliest sin of all the mortal seven—
Would rather “reign in hell, than serve in heaven.”

And hence (so suicidal follies work)
Our kirk-born pride, ere long, rejects the kirk ;
And—(as from public-ball small gentry wheel
To squeeze select in parlour cribs genteel)

Comrades no longer—Leaders all would be,
In chapel snug, or pious coterie ;
And—orthodoxy, like old empire, gone—
Like Satraps, split the realm—to seize a throne.

—'Twere better done—if Churches thus may
thin—

Like ancient Rome to 'ascribe new nations in,
Far as we may each sacred Guild extend,
Hard names forbear—and greet as Friend to Friend.

B.—But, strongly feeling, strongly we express.

A.—Yet Permanence, how little waits on Stress !
Half-Christian Plato ! long thy mild controul
Clung to the musings of the thoughtful soul ;
While harsher lore—the Cynic's bitter flow,
And all the dogmas of the Portico,
Dictators once—ruled but their little year,—
A story now—a moral—or a sneer.

Truth, self-assured, no wrathful flutter knows,
As sculptured strength is noblest in repose.
'Tis thus some Masterpiece of Grecian art
Speaks to the vision of the thoughtful heart,
And, mildly powerful, tames the gazer's breast
To the calm spirit of Majestic Rest.

Ye Suns, which every clime in order strike,
Ye generous Breezes, poured for all alike ;
Hues, for all hearts outspread thro' western skies,
Fields—Woods—with each your odours, forms and
dyes,
Which all may gaze upon or breathe at will,
And, if unlike, all odorous—beauteous—still ;
From lip of blooming rose or lily's cup
Or whence-soe'er, One incense offering up ;
Do ye in sooth no exhortation read,
Ye mild Analogies ! to milder creed ?

And, more than these, Thou, all-recipient Mind !
That, not to fleshy^{ly} tenement confined,

Canst thence, as from some watch-tower's narrow bound,
Scan, like Astronomer, all ether round,
Or glance at will to each remotest place
Of earth's domain, the Denizen of Space ;
Thou great Discoverer ! chartered to explore
Far steppe, or central range, or circling shore,
From where, contracted to their pigny span,
The Polar Race recedes almost from man,
To where Circassia's ever-favoured earth
Guards the fine impress of primeval birth ;
Or cleavest th' unparcelled sea, our world's highway !
Or hung on planet, cycling far away,
Its path, its period with high thought canst dare,
Nor e'er dost stoop to doubt that Good is there ;
Oh how (like felon who not heeds the link
Which galls his limb, so he but eat and drink)
Oh ! how may'st Thou, to such brave height once risen,
Crouch down content in some sour dogma's prison ?

Or if, descending from that height sublime,
We turn the records of historic time,

Of many a vanished age the deeds recal,
 And think—and act—and grieve—and hope with All,
 Their opportunities—temptations—scan,
 And finding Human—sympathize as Man,
 Led onward thus to gentle thoughts and free,
 Say why—Devotion!—are we doomed to be
 But harsh and narrow when we link with Thee?

Let Thought with Love but teach us to expand,
 And Love shall teach yet more to understand ;
 So he who climbs finds other hills in view
 Far o'er the plain and climbs those others too :
 And winning thus his prospect—part by part—
 Stamps in the end All Nature on his heart.

B.—" But Principles we hate, and not the Man."

A.—"Tis dangerous thus to balance on a span ;
 For spite each nice distinction, logic-spun,
 Thinker and Thought, to common minds, are one.
 Not Calvin's self could snap the vulgar tether,
 So burned the Man and Principles together.

Give Law her sword—to Faith her bough of peace ;
For conscience Faith was meant, and not police ;
No petty constable at wake or fair,
But the heart's silent guardian everywhere.

B.—"Not Peace I came to send ye, but a
Sword."
'Tis Scripture text.

A.—And Calvin's ill-strained word.
Calvin—who made God's judgment—fore-decree,
And but some gloomier Dis his deity ;
Whose doctrine was a Babel, jargoned o'er
With strifes of thought, as strifes of tongue,
before ;
—Election !—Reprobation !—terms as clear
As ancient Asia's mystic character,
The pilgrim puzzling, while he stoops to pick
From some half dubious site his lettered brick ;
—Or catacomb, 'mid whose dim caverns crost,
Man "finds no end, in wandering mazes lost."

The particle divine—the guiding spark—
Love, that like sun-beam, beckons through the dark,
On Her I call'd, to cheer the abhorred gloom,
And echo'd every vault—"Predestined Doom."

B.—Yet now—no Rothschild—greedy king to soothe,
Is strained to yield an ingot—or a tooth ;
No star-chambers their penal dues devise,
Then priest-like, feed upon the sacrifice ;
—The *race* were bigot then :—now—each, at need,
Finds, at least here,—fit couch to suit his creed.

A.—And if thou choose some couch of theirs, 'tis
well—
Or lend thy single wave their tides to swell ;
But self-supporting Faith, that swears to none,
Or pledges Sacrament to God alone,
—Such as our holy Milton chose at last—
At this by every hand some stone is cast.—

Hence Worldly Calculation leagues with Sect,
Where breastworks guard and battle lines protect ;

And, like shrewd knave, enlisted Regular,
 Claims surety from acknowledged rights of war ;
 While the poor clown, unprivileged by drill,
 Home who defends, is hanged or shot at will.

Thus faith, that fain would seem communion high,
 —Let truth be told,—full oft is policy ;
 A home-insurance—a prudential plan—
 By some avowed—through God to manage Man.

B.—Yet pause and say—this policy austere,
 Till our third George's day scarce thriving here,
 Whence sprouts it now ?

A.—From league of pride and fear ;
 From league of anxious pride and courage lax,
 For sway their sceptre, for defence their tax ;
 Such two-fold sword, as cunning fencers wield,
 At once an edge to smite, and ward to shield.

When lofty Charles and ancient Privilege
 Of new-mailed liberty first felt the siege,

Then first Old England rather groan'd, than rang,
With godly hymns and Barebones' nasal twang.
But then, not less, the godless cavalier
Flung his loose ballad on the offended ear ;
And still, for so extremes extremes provoke,
Mocked the prim preachment with the ribald joke.

A following century struck a wiser mean ;
The mass was then more cheerful, but more clean.
Yet then un-prudish Addison could win,
Then Pope deem'd raillery, unstarch'd, no sin ;
Then scornful Swift could frolic with free touch,
And Peachum pleased a race that robbed not much.
Some even have played with Congreve's comic lyre,
Nor felt the tinder temp'rament take fire.
War with pretence satiric Fielding waged,
Yet thousands read of Blifil unenraged ;
(For least who feign are least by banter crost,
'Tis doubtful titles stir the passions most ;)
And follies forth, and forth e'en vices streamed,
Yet Man, meanwhile, was Better than he seem'd.

Then too our Second George, not over-staid,
Would lead his court to merry masquerade,
And if the mask chance-vices covered there,
'Twas not, as 'neath the Third, life's daily wear.

And Puritans, extinct, had ceased to rage,
And vex with holy war the graceful Stage ;
And then if Constance, or discrowned Lear,
Had roused some loftier throb or deeper tear ;
Or sweet Miranda's purest womanhood
Touched the fine sense of Beautiful and Good ;
Or glorious Falstaff, raciest son of earth,
Shook from his sides immeasurable mirth ;
Or free Autolycus, as nature free,
Had won to bear his rogueries for his glee,
E'en then--no follower of play-scourging Pryune
Denounced, as now, the Sympathy for Sin.

And then--though Wesley--strong in fervent youth,
Strong in man's weakness, strong in his own truth,
Followers, ere long, drew round him--Hope and Fear--
Rueful Pretence, and Penitence sincere ;

Votaries, the most with little to resign,
Rude audience—from the workshop or the mine ;
And though erewhile, at pride's or faith's command,
Some titled dowager would head the band ;
For stimulants still charm fair devoteo,
Chapel for church—for writ, extempore— ;
And though a court, more decent than beforo,
With cowl and hood court-vices covered o'er,
And cast from Windsor's towers a monkish gloom ;
Yet Frankness still had genial air and room—
Free, in the main, to pray—or sport—at will—
And our dear land was “ merry England ” still.

—But when, as chanced, from limbs and wearied reins
Franco, slavery-stung, burst body-bands and chains ;
Some were rejoiced—some doubted—some were sad—
But all, at length, allowed her freedom—mad—
Most for our own proclaimed a muzzle right,
Some would have slain—so much they feared the bite.
The danger, seen through mist, loomed large and near,
And Reason—Principles—were lost in Fear.

Then ancient statesmen took their daily range
Round one small spot, and shuddering talked of change;
—Or, nighed, discreet, behind Prescription's shield,
In his own wrong, urged Valour to the field.
Wealth, 'mid his coffers, feared th' approaching war,
And ribboned Title trembled for his star;
Vague unused terrors crept upon the brave,
And scarce the scornful Bar its scorn could save.
The ready Pulpit joined the Statesman's game,
And Freedom walked our British soil in shame.

And then, though some of wiser, loftier views,
By Meditation kindled, or the Muse,
With peril not unthreatened, took their stand,
And taught "unawed amid a slavish band,"
E'en these, though strong to bid the Few rejoice,
Yet found no echo in the general voice;
For still, o'er leaden brains and hearts of clay
Philosophy and Song both died away.

Nor well-starred They, to whom, in that sharp hour,
Heaven gave the gifts of Genius and of Power,

And poured upon their spirits, like a flood,
 The heroic instincts of the Pure and Good,—
 In world-shunn'd solitude alone they stood,
 Feared and yet scorned,—half excommunicate,
 Detraction joyed on all their steps to wait,
 And infant foes were taught to lisp in hate.

Nor strange, if then, by force prevailing prest,
 —For still 'mid storm the Pliant fares the best—
 Apostate natures recantation sung ;
 Then with new vigour, virulent as young,
 Well nigh to blood the ready rabble stung ;
 When Priestley, driven in distant lands to roam,
 Himself the flames scarce 'scaped that wrapt his home.

—But thou, Transcendent Burke, Ambiguous Sage !
 Great Light, at once, yet Darkener of our age !
 Beneath thy home's necessities severe
 A pensioned pleader, yet of soul sincere ;
 If thou, when zeal to blinding passion grew,
 Could'st overlook the Many for the Few ;

Lend thy strong hand to prop proud prelate lord,
And o'er the serf keep hung the feudal sword ;
Yet that all-grasping sense, that fancy's fire,
That pictured speech, far ages shall admire ;
That intellectual chivalry, whose pride
Was glorious combat on the weaker side ;
That generous heart, which saw th' Oppressor low,
Then " quite forgot his vices in his woe."

Strange fear of Change beneath thy Sorcery grew,
And Kings perplexed and smote the Nations too ;
And strengthened These on ancient forms to rest,
And cheated Those to hold old forms the best.

Such was the cup that met my youngling lip,
And, pressed in friendly guise, not hard to sip.
Yet from the draught full soon I learn'd to shrink,
As healthful stomachs loathe the sick man's drink.
Smooth as it was—and well contrived to steep
The drowsing sense in slavery's icy sleep ;
Yet then, as nature kindly willed it should,
Forth from the proffered evil leapt a good ;

Th' o'erstrong narcotic played a wholesome part,
And, with redeeming nausea, cleans'd the heart.

—Then first it was, in rising manhood warm,
Fondly I dared to gaze on Freedom's form.
Some high-born Grecian maid she seemed to be,
With open brow and wild eye glancing free—
Wild glancing eye, that yet could flash a frown,
If need there were, to awe presumption down.
Stirred deeply by her pure yet thrilling touch,
At glowing twenty I might glow too much ;
But now the headlong age, that deems amiss,
Is past—and knowledge shows her as she is,
In the clear mirror of calm judging truth,
Almost the vision of my earliest youth ;
E'en now, if force at home, or foreign arms,
Would quell that glancing eye, or soil those charms ;
If lustful kings should mark her for their prey,
Or the vile mob, more fierce and lewd than they ;
E'en now, with deeper, holier love adored,
I fly to shield or save her with the sword.

Yes—Kings might learn, if truth could reach a throne,
That Freedom's dearest rights are all their own.
That where the free-born soul hath leave to start,
Quickened themselves, and quickening every heart,
They lead—at will—a more devoted throng
Than e'er for Asian despot rolled along,
Lead to heroic life, or glorious graves ;
But Themselves wither in a land of Slaves.
So wisdom deems. So Britain deemed no more,
And exiled Freedom fled the scoffing shore !

Soon—Freedom, queen of willing service, gone,
Hypocrisy usurped the vacant throne ;
Cheered by the proud—the rich—the base—the dull—
And every fool, too cold to play the fool.
All in one grave demeanour primly deckt,
—For Gravity still cheats with most effect—
City and Court, all false and all afraid,
Low at her feet their solemn mummeries played.
The sneering Sceptic there, to swell the band,
Linked with the noisy Bigot, hand-in-hand ;

There bold impetuous Speed, on fire to go,
Reined in by prudent Dulness, paced it slow ;
And there, with all beguiling, few beguiled,
Augur looked Augur in the face, nor smiled.—

Then frightened Wealth, as new-scared converts use,
Repaired church pulpits and re-lined his pews ;
In those new precincts dozed at morning prayer,
And when he took his evening nap, 'twas there.

Nor less in grave committee was he seen,
The district-Draco, with demurest mien ;
While brief decorum nursed a double zest
For the coarse story and the tawdry jest.

“ When Evil men conspire, the Good combine : ”
This flamed their flag device, their motto line.
By this each Mummer vowed, not swore, to stand,
And new-born statutes vermined thro' the land.
'Twas then, like loathsome worm, in loathsome sty,
The rank Informer swelled and Prompter Spy—

How fostered there let wiser heads decide,
By Love for Virtue or the Hates of Pride.

—’Twas thus by Pride and Fear the pact was built,
When Godliness held forth his hand to Guilt ;
Yet hence his own snug vice each fondles free,
Safe in the cloak of that free-masonry.—
So when our Bacchus of the Colonnade
To cheap champagne invites and masquerade,
Sinner and Saint, coarse manners and foul skin,
Beneath the shrouding domino all slip in.

Then vaunt we not of “pious.”—Oft as heard,
False, hackney’d as it is, I hate the word !
Whether on graceful Fry, with eloquent lip,
Or Stock-exchange Apostle—with his *Scrip* ;
Or lean tub-orator, with way-worn feet,
Or well-paid elub-itinérant, posting fleet ;
Or quaker, proudly-plain, or judge be-furred,
The nauseous praise be hithed, I hate the word—
Term prostitute ! like prostitute, allied
By turns, with fraud—with meanness or with pride.

In Gentile days, while yet the darkling crowd
Clashed shields to Mars, or low to Plutus bowed,
A Piety arose, of birth divine,
Like that, first known on earth in Palestine ;
Teacher of doctrines, yet dissuading hate,
A scrip, his treasury,—and a staff, his state—
Mere Pilgrim, glory—gold—rejecting all,
And sprung too fresh from heaven, for earthly thrall.

—A farther day that sandal'd Pilgrim sees,
With “mitred front, in courts and palaces.”
For simple scrip, huge coffers whence to draw,
For simple staff, sustaining sword of law.—
With statesmen leagued, with smooth expectants round,
New see to beckon,—family to found,—
Thus hardly placed beneath temptation's rod,
Ah ! me—if Mammon share his heart with God !

O'er bustled with the World—this truth confess—
Religion drops, too oft, to Worldliness ;
Of many a heaven-born hope foregoes the hold,
And every hour soils more with earthly mould ;

Yet, decent ever, looks and moves with care,
And ushers Peccadillo in—with Prayer.

Let Saints to regal roofs make rare resort ;
Not oft a Cloister purifies a Court.
Nay, let experience tell, the Royal Touch,—
—Least—when most fond—not aids Religion much ;
Infects with human lusts, with worldly hopes,
And taints from Village Vicars up to Popes.
Faith's essence pure sublimes o'er King and Queen,
Nor should a Laïs ever make a Dean.

But if our Church and State must needs combine,
And at each levee bow some stout Divine,
—I, little bred in theocratic school,
Would rather there behold him bow, than rule.

—For when, in courtly service wax'd too great,
Some Laud, or some La Chaise, assumes the state ;
Conscience must wait, all trembling, at his beck,
And burdened Faith, like camel, cower the neck ;

Or free if these should stand and nought afraid,
Like Hermit Peter, he proclaims crusade ;
Prudence, old pilot, dashes from the helm,
And, for some idle dictum, wrecks a realm.

And, hardly more, amid the quorum kind,
“ In fair round belly, with good capon lined,
“ And eyes severe, and beard of formal cut,”
Lovo I to see the Parish Pastor put ;
There to discourse of partridges and hares,
And hold grave descant on the guilt of snares ;
Then raise his tone, and feel, or feign, an ire,
Such as may please his Lordship or the Squire !

In yon low hut, yon orphan'd hearth anear,
Me more delights our Curate mild to hear,
With holier “ instances ” and “ wiser saw,”
Than ever came from human wit or law.

Ah ! me—if mammon scarcely less affect
Us too, the flock, establishment and sect !

In earthly coin all struggling to be paid,
And traders all—in grand or petty trade.

Frail the mere faith, in love not founded deep,
By every worldly interest lulled to sleep,
Be God himself, alone, our love, our pride ;
For pay who serves, perchance may swerve aside.
Here earth's rich realms, there heaven's far-visioned
coast,
What marvel, if the nearest tempt the most !

Blest days were those, ere clustering clubs had birth,
And men stood prized for individual worth.—
Ere yet the vain, the cunning, and the crazed
Coarse conclaves held—be-praising and be-praised ;
Their force—mere pioneer for fortune's way—
Their meekness—but a mask for worldly sway.

Glad for themselves, not scornful for the rest,
—So best is praise to heaven, thro' love, addrest—
Then the meek Layman, and the Layman's wife,
Contented trod the sheltering vale of life ;

Their docile hearts to sabbath lessons turned,
Nor dared to teach, but practised what they learn'd ;
For trespasses forgiven implored, each day,
And, more than all, temptations kept away ;
Each happy in the joy plain duty breeds,
And winning heaven e'en less with prayers than deeds.

The Pastor then "to all the country dear"—
No platform orator—no pamphleteer—
Not basely busy for committee sway,
Nor plotting glories for some public day ;
Not skilful with God's name to interlace
Smooth flatteries for villains high in place :
Nor darting round, from undisputed chair,
O'er prostrate souls damnation and despair,
Down to degrade pure love of God's own law
To felon fear, by lashes kept in awe ;
He, 'mid the shades of parish usefulness,
To his home flock did his whole soul address,
Or wrought, retired within that studious home,
Some learned toil for ages yet to come ;

Nor harsh, meanwhile, nor loud ; but mildly grave,
And still most mild, when most intent to save.

Such were the " pious race " of other days,
And many a lingerer still deserves the praise.
But these, though heaven look kindly on the race,
Our Sancto-Critics deem devoid of grace ;
A piety baptize of coarser frame,
And every busy bustler wins the name.

Where now our " Pious Pastor ?"—Seek him there,
In the stoved chapel, near the modish square,
Around where lady patronesses throng,
And list a sermon—as they list a song.

But not like him, whom Cowper's touch could show,
Of doctrine light, and pastor less than beau ;
In pulpit tactics He more deeply wise
Of Calvin's creed the stirring lore applies ;
Like him, with mystic phrase, succeeds to move,
And holds, like him, by threatenings more than love.

Nor shuns he now to vent the sound austere
Of hell, erst irksome to politer ear ;
While, each to other wafts the penalty,
“ For me th’ angelic flower—its thorns for thee ; ”
Some pleasure strange e’en that dread word excites,
A “ belle horreur,” that tickles as it frights.—

Yet parish duties him suffice not half ;
O’er farther flocks must stretch that pastoral staff.
His week-day works yon echoing hall must greet,
Where clashing chariots block the wrangling street ;
Or hand-bill spread, or paragraph must teach,
Or his own modest after-dinner speech !

All are not such ! One know I, mild, sincere,
From low ambition, as from avarice clear ;
With tolerance blest, with lore, by toil unrolled ;
All Grecian sage, all Hebrew bard, hath told ;
Critic, yet shrinking from polemic strife ;
And Teacher, whose best lesson is his life !
On him, and minds like his, when sad I sink,
My wearied heart, refreshing, turns to think—

But names, that Virtue shall be proud to shrine,
Too well I love, to mar with praise of mine !

Yon " Pious " Layman—(not like him of yore)—
So well the pupil tests the teacher's lore—
Yon " Pious " Layman—he whose bursting purse
For widows', orphans' trusts, is ne'er the worse ;
Say whence could he the holy claim imbibe ?
He found it in two words, " subscribe—subscribe."
Is there a mission—some enthusiast's dream ?
Or new-planned church—a builder-preacher's scheme ?
Some week-day sermon ?—Jew-converting school ?—
Pleased to be marked, and not unpleas'd to rule,
The busiest, boldest, of the gathering tribe,
He dins from door to door, " subscribe—subscribe—"
For all his toil of body and of lung,
—Like Irus, stout of limb, and glib of tongue,—
The sole return his modest wishes dare,
The treasurer's office, and the voted chair ;
The snug job contract, the consulting fee,
And all the honour of the charity !

Yet he, meanwhile, with looks that bear no part
With the low interests grovelling at his heart,
Can talk of labours, but for conscience, hard !
Then hint how virtue is its own reward,
And own some hopes of heaven—in humbleness !—
Though disappointed, none need miss it less,
Who, if in truth, no other world were his,
Hath schemed so well to be repaid in this !

There are, I know, with purest impulse fraught,
Impulse, not wildly good—but duty-taught,—
Who to no human eye their acts address,
Seen, or unseen, their instinct but to bless ;
Their pity, but without its pride, impart,
Let gold pay gold, but conquer heart with heart.
Spirits like these no phrase of mine would wound,
For if not here, oh ! where is holy ground ?

And what tho' sometimes with this finer joy
A human frailty mingle its alloy ;
And the pure ore of hearts, love-satisfied,
Some tinge betray, less pure, fused in by pride ;

E'en then, t' assay the vessel's quality
But little prone, whence want may drink supply,
Not mine to intercept the flattering fame—
Their's be the vestry vote, the public name;
Nay, not the beadle, as he bustles by,
Shall doff his hat more civilly than I.—

But for the paltry tribe, who calculate,
Still ere they give, the profit and the rate;
Each pro and con. in balanced file arrayed,
And charity itself,—a thing of trade ;
And e'en, when worldly least, then lent, not given ;
Upcounting still their interest-score with heaven ;
But for these ruffian-mendicants ; (just such
Le Sage hath drawn—a musket for a crutch ;)
Who quest for alms, in accent of command,
And in the name of pity, bid me stand ;
Hector'd by such, I prize at equal rate
Who robs me with the pistol, or the plate.—

Yet this might pass ; and He, without my plaint,
A Worldling here, be worshipp'd there a Saint.

On saintly throne, by brother worldlings set,
The well-fumed Lama of his own Thibet !
But if he wield that most ill-gotten name,
A mace to batter down his neighbour's fame,
And crush who scorns to flatter ; stung at this,
What marvel, if I paint him as he is !
Then from his full-blown pride and bursting bags,
Turn to revere sincerity in rags !

B.—If motive-sifting thus our deeds you touch,
The world will say that you refine too much.

A.—That Deeds are good or ill, as motive-wrought ;
That holiest Forms, not Spirit-fed, are nought ;
That Piety degrades her high-born strain,
In scramble with the mammon tribe for Gain ;
That Charity of Heart is heaven's delight ;
These are Plain Truths, and Maxims very Trite.
Yet, as still-trickling rain-drops, one by one,
Will wear their impress on obdurate stone ;
As green trees clustering round our very door,
Seen daily, for that cause but please the more ;

So Moral Truths, that seek not to surprise,
As more familiar, more attract the wise ;
So Maxims Trite, their frequency their strength,
By repetition stamp themselves at length ;
With oft-driven furrow, first, the Reason till ;
Then, from the Reason, pass into the Will.—

Let Meditation deep—let Fancy bold—
Vaunt of new matter—I but dress the old ;
Perchance ill dress ; but striving nothing New,
Am well content to be accorded True.

ARGUMENT TO DIALOGUE II.

FEMALE RELIGIONISM—NOT ALWAYS FAVOURABLE TO THE DOMESTIC VIRTUES.
CONTROVERSIAL WIFE. FAITH IS NURTURED BY THE HOME-AFFECTIONS.
LOUIS XIV. CALVIN. FENELON. LEGAL PENALTIES FOR CREED. PANTHEISM
AND SCHISM. CREEDS MODIFIED BY INDIVIDUAL TEMPER. TEXT AND CON-
TEXT. TESTS AND SUBSCRIPTIONS. WHEN TOO STRONGLY PRESSED THEY
LEAD TO SCHISM OR DISBELIEF. RIGHT OF PRIVATE JUDGMENT. ROMISH
AND PROTESTANT AUTHORITY. ATHANASIUS AND THE THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES.
REASONS FOR TOLERANCE, DEDUCED FROM CHRISTIAN PRECEPT—FROM THE
NATURE OF THE MIND. FAITH NOT AN ACT OF WILL. FURTHER REASONS
FOR TOLERANCE. GEOGRAPHICAL CREED. INFLUENCE OF EXTERNAL OB-
JECTS—OF THE AFFECTIONS. INTOLERANCE OFTEN SPRINGS FROM IGNOR-
ANCE, OR FROM FEAR. ALL CREEDS INVOLVE SOMETHING OF GOOD AND
TRUE. MAN NATURALLY DISPOSED TO VIRTUE—WHENCE A STRONG ARGU-
MENT FOR LOVE TOWARDS GOD. ARGUMENT FOR TOLERANCE FROM THE
NECESSARY EXISTENCE OF RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES. DOUBT AND ITS UN-
HAPPINESS. RELIEF—ITS BLESSEDNESS—WHETHER SPRINGING FROM SEN-
TIMENT OR FROM INQUIRY. TOLERANCE ONE FRUIT OF INQUIRY. MILLEN-
NIUM. CONCLUSION.

DIALOGUE II.

And though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.—1 Cor. xiii.

A.—By no faint shame withheld from general gaze,
 'Tis thus, my friend, we bask us in the blaze ;
 Where deeds, more surface-smooth than inly bright,
 Snatch up a transient lustre from the light.

Yet as rich hues, in loom of nature spun,
 The rose itself, will fade in torrid sun ;
 Or diamond to vapour fleet away,
 In the fierce furnace of the focal ray ;
 True virtues thus, of finer frame or hue,
 In that unnatural glare of public view,
 Their beauty lose—and lose their essence too.

}

Applause least wins, where hearty thoughts engage,
'Tis the mere Actor frets him for a Stage.—

Nor Man alone now strives for saintly fame,
The passion steals o'er many a gentle Dame ;
And faith, that once held timid course—to pray,—
Now throbs in furious lust of public sway.
How could I dream, that thou shouldst e'er affect,
Gay, flirting Phyllis, leadership of sect ?
Frank and fond-hearted then, if not discreet ;
The censor now, and terror of the street.

Yet, Phyllis, by thy new evangelism
Though puzzled sore, I never called it schism.
Knelt at thy bible-rout, where chairs were hassocks,
And petticoats expounded texts—like cassocks ;
With penny contributions wage no war,
Nor breathed one comment on thy ball-bazaar.
If thoughts *will* rise, when simpering Rosa barter
For coin of whisker'd cornet ladies' garters ;
If gallopade be scarce a saint-like frolic,
And waltz, though winning, hardly apostolic ;

Earth thus for heaven to tax may yet be meet,
 Odour of gain, spring whence it will, is sweet * ;
 And if, in sooth, sprout forth some small abuses,
 Yet all come sanctified to pious uses.

License thus far, fair Saint, my creed accords—
 But blame I must that tongue, “whose words are swords.”
 If holier now, dear Phyllis, than of yore,
 And great the gain—be tolerant yet the more ;
 For of all humours by which soul is crost,
 A piety, turned acrid, cankers most.—

Melancthon ! well didst thou thy mother sway
 To keep her aged feet in the old way ;
 With life's first lights to cheer its evening gloom,
 And drop, in placid temper, to the tomb.—

As quiet leaf, that sleeps on summer trees,
 Will turn and tremble to the awakening breeze ;

* *Lucri bonus est odor ex re*

Qualibet.—JUVENAL, 14 Sat. l. 204.

As glassy lake, that wood and sky reflects,
Or ruin, boast of ancient architects,
Let the gale rise, and clouds come clustering o'er,
With wave upheaved runs darkening to the shore ;
Sensitive Woman thus (as some have thought,
With sympathies, yet more than logic, fraught,)
O'er her sweet rest should winds of doctrine blow,
Quick as the leaf, will vibrate to and fro,
Or break from anchorage, where she rode at ease,
And whelm her own, and wreck her household's peace.

And yet Devotion, though from high her birth,
Was made to dwell amid the ties of earth,
And, with her own melodious prayer to blend
All gentle names of family and friend.
And if not always in her eager ears
Responses ring, immediate from the spheres,
Yet sweetest echoes back from earth are given,
That if not heavenly all,—still speak of heaven.

But, Woman, Thou, who o'er the craving soul
Would'st nought but heaven's unmingled music roll ;

Thou, soon or late, shalt feel th' o'erwrought desire
On the strained strings or languish or expire ;
And then Hypocrisy—forgive the word—
Steals in and—for Devotion—smites the chord ;
Or through that gentle breast, by stealth, in glide
The vexing demons of Dispute and Pride.

Ah ! then, when daily joys less fondly press,
When Sister—Friend—or Husband win thee less,
Through thine own bosom stern inquiry move,
And sift, if this, indeed, be Holy Love !

Giver of gifts ! Disposer of my life !
Oh ! save me from a Controversial Wife !
Each Gospel lesson be it her's to prize,
But more its Duties than its Mysteries ;
Her sigh to guilt,—her tear to suffering given,—
And, night and morn, her own sweet prayer to
 heaven ;
But let no demon tempt her to the claim
Of Parlour-Disputant's ill-sorted fame ;

Such theologic triumphs all not worth
One happy household-look—one quiet evening hearth.

Thou Faith, with whom, when purest,—group un-
riven—

Link Charity, for earth—and Hope, for Heaven—
(Group lovelier than those favourite Three of Jove,
By fabling chisel wreath'd for classic love ;)
Before whose upward glances, glory-fraught,
Words quail, and faints the ineffectual thought ;
Yet, downward from that high communion sped,
Then, sweetest Comforter of sorrow's bed ;
'Tis thine in human hearts, unforced, to grow,
Dropt gently in from all we see and know ;
And, of all earthly spots, thou lov'st to dwell,
Unvex'd, in home affection's tranquil cell.
To thee, plain prayer—proud mass—each varying
toll—

All are but types, whose essence is the soul ;
Tests—synods—these thy spirit loves, nor lacks,
But warder's bolt abhors and lictor's axe.

Louis, by servile France misnamed the Great,
(In France when kingship stood at higher rate)
Say, could he hear, where now, most Stately Shade,
He loves to plan some Stygian masquerade ;
—Or, following up the bent of mortal will,
Along Cocytus weaves the grave quadrille ;
—Or rather, leaving now that fabled plain,
To take, as suits our theme, a graver strain ;—
Say—would he still his earthly dogmas hold ?—
And meek, yet steadfast faith, and conscience bold,
These would he deem that Kings—that God—should
pay
With dragonnades on earth and pains for aye !
Or of a wise Repentance feel the weight,
And o'er each bitter edict weep—too late !

Ye who on mortal man temptations shower,
One trial spare, and prove him not with Power !

For, as changed soil still modifies the seed,
As clime adds fierceness, gentleness, to breed ;

As chemists mark, when like approaches like,
How strong affinities will rush to strike ;
As generous wine that makes the cheerful glad,
Transforms the dull to stern—the wild to mad ;
So Faith, in harsh or gentle bosom sown,
Shapes here a Calvin—here a Fénelon—
Him who his Lord's own spirit seemed to wake,
And him, who burned Servetus at the stake.

“ Mighty, we shout, is Truth, and must prevail,”
Nor, till the glove be thrown, begin to quail.
Then in her scutcheon we suspect a flaw,
And harness, for the battle, strong in law ;
And as the doubtful duel draws more near,
More doubt the verdict of the Ithuriel spear ;
’List some stout Pleader—Second for the fight,
And pack a jury—to decide the right.

Yet Truth from Themis asks nor sword nor mace,
Give but the quiet balance in their place.
Who with brute force her temperate cause defends,
Her plaint must bide—“ Protect me from my friends ;”

And thence may ponder on His patient word,
Who bade the hot disciple "Sheath his sword !"

Beneath the proud Pantheon's girdling dome
When found all vagrant Deities a home,
From some fond votary each received a prayer,
And Nemesis and Até had their share.
But when that vast idolatry was gone,
And Faith, less darken'd, worshipp'd but the One,
To Him each worshipper, in selfish guise,
Transferred his favourite Virtue or his Vice.
In Love, Love found his godhead.—The Severe
Felt not the Love, and bowed alone to Fear.
Each culled some different text—Self-Will to stay—
Or read the self-same text—a different way.

So—Passions still were Deities—and Schism,
As free to choose—but sourer Pantheism ;—
And hence 'twixt sect and sect, when strifes arose,
And banded Converts widened off to Foes,
The scornful Sadducee would jeer amain
At Discord and the Furies come again !

Thus Doctrines, rebel natures meant to bind,
Themselves, more oft, are govern'd by each Mind.
Most have two Creeds.—The one from Ritual known,
The other, Temper-moulded, and our own.—

Reason may balance with her patient poise,
But Temper-creeds admit no compromise.
—As Friends, far sundered by the Atlantic main,
To friendship cling, and sigh to meet again ;
Yet when to Village Neighbourhood they draw,
Like other neighbours, stickle for a straw ;
So minds that muse, with no unkindly heed,
Where mountain doubts divide, on distant creed ;
Let but some two approach so near together,
Mere feather parts, will quarrel for that feather ;
And fume that, won almost to concert pitch,
Accord should there, abruptly, make its hitch.

Some from themselves wide differing, yet sincere,
Swerved by disturbing fancies, swiftly veer ;
Or if, like Saurian monsters, turned with pain,
Once turned—dart forward fiercely straight again ;

Now grasp the Whole, now some stray Serap recal,
(For Text or Context oft is difference all)
Yet, Bosom-pride of every change the root,
For each would Suffer, or would Persecute ;
—Had Martyrs or Inquisitors become,
And dared—or lit—your fires, Madrid and Rome.

The Goule—'tis story of Arabian strain—
Her rice picked up with bodkin, grain by grain ;
And nature thus, we scarce know why, imparts
Her needle intellects and pin-point hearts—
We scarce know why, unless her aim hath been
Word-Critic shrewd, or Theologian keen,
Who, dull to what precedes, or follows next,
Clips out his Godhead from some single text.

Scize we, with wider scope, the Gospel's Whole,
Flux dim with clear, and fuse along the soul.
Then—when our Form beams forth, of perfect mould,
And not one drossy fragment specks its gold ;
—Then, let Comparison together strike
This and *That* Image—and oh ! how unlike.

So Scripture text may serve man's Mortal Foe,
So Scripture text hath wrought our weal or woe ;
Now interceding Saint, that leads to God,
Hired Bravo now, that stabs at Hatred's nod.
He least perplexed through discrepance shall move,
Who makes his running comment—Christian Love.

B.—But now, concede, we neither hang nor burn ;
Tests are mere Forms.—From ours you'll scarcely turn.
What Virtue—Wisdom—own, if Thou reject,
Of Prejudice—of Pride—thysself suspect.

A.— But where Compliance helps to mend our store,
'Twere wisdom to suspect ourselves yet more.
—All courtesy to faith of foeman shown,
I deem not well to parley with our own.

Nor well to pledge, where Tests—grown Forms—
disjoin
The inward Spirit from the outward Sign ;
For that first Insincerity, confess'd,
Sheds its far tinge of Doubt on all the rest.

Who Truth on Falsehood builds, with idiot hand
But piles his granite on a shifting sand.

Bold Gelon, called at length to pastoral cares,
Sifts through the test he scorns and stoutly swears.
Servio, with wiser heart, if weaker head,
To 'scape dilemma, gulps the oaths unread.

Whoe'er to "sticking place" his heart would screw
For Faith, or Fair,—at least should deem them true.
Worn Creeds have pluck'd new strength from rival
Schism,
But die beneath a bought Indifferentism.

Why must Authority on oaths insist,
When thus we take and break them, as we list?
And where the justice of a penal due,
That holds the frank and lets the cunning through?

Reared up in Paley's qualm-controlling school,
Our good old Granta's comfortable rule—

You say Subscription scarce was meant to bind—
But is there here no martyrdom of mind ?
Accept—and lurks no Snare for conscience by ?
Refuse—and threats no starving Penalty ?
If now no Alva torture for the state,
Is there no Alva in a private Hate ?
No Force, when lacking plaint of guiltier deed,
We criminate a neighbour for his Creed ?

That neighbour on thy manor starts a doubt,
Or from thy favourite vestry votes thee out.
The law forbids to stab the man or stone.—
Hint him not Orthodox, thy work is done.
Let honest fools cry, “ Shame.” Thou, unperplexed,
Shalt show good warrant in some twisted text ;
Whilst hand with thine each coward foe shall link,
With Thee combining,—if like Him they think.

Perchance, the very Courts shall help thee
through ;
For truth and justice have, long since, been two.

Lo ! where yon Pleader-knave—Paine's perfect growth—
 With well-fee'd horror probes some Sectary's oath.
 With " Sir, you this reject "—or " this believe."
 (The judge—perchance—no stickler in his sleeve ;)
 Then doffs that mask devout—just one hour worn—
 For curse habitual, and a sceptic scorn.

And who but grieves, when dooms dogmatic part
 From Priesthood's lip—more rarely from his heart ;
 To *that*, more oft, some milder reading taught
 By gentle nature, or by critic thought.
 What though his voice subdued, and shrinking eye
 Speak word and thought contending inwardly ;
 What though, stern Athanase, (if Sainted once,)
 Thy curses win from Mercy no response ;
 Yet, dropped on soil of Ignorance or Pride,
 To Hate they spring, and man from man divide ;
 Of old—to pyre of martyrdom gave birth,
 Now agonise some dear domestic hearth,
 When son or husband, starting from the thrall,
 Incredulous hates—then madly doubts of all*.

* Quodcunque ostendis mihi sic—incredulus odi.—HORAT. *ARS POET.*

Where Bigotry in voice of vengeance speaks,
Himself fore-slays the very end he seeks.
Some kneeling Faith near Tolerance still is found,
Intolerance wafts Scepticism round ;
Or else to other folds drives clean away
Whom sophist tongues had never lured to stray.

Benign examples, on which all may look,
Plead more for creed than preachment or than book,
Of many a rising schism repress the spark,
Or win the rebel back and save the ark.

—Yet, spite of time and trial, still the same,
Our explications and our oaths we frame ;
Frame for eternity !—though every year
Steal silent on, its own Interpreter.
The Forms meanwhile remain, a seemly crust,
Till some Chance hurtle—and the things are dust !
Like dust or petty nuisance scorned ; but yet
Potent, till then, to torture or to fret.

Lore, from calm bowers, by Cam and Isis laved !

Lore, by fond Youth with cheated transport craved !
'Tis yours to lure the young Enquirer on,
Through many a path, that tracks from ages gone,
Till, where Thought's vistas open yet more free,
Subscription blocks the way—and bans Degree ;
And, while a thousand powers of prospect stir,
Would strain to beg some loop-hole glimpse from Her.

Who crouches through that low and narrow door,
To him his Fate cries sternly—" Think no more."
Hard to abstain, but perilous to press,
Where after-thought may bring " the more or less " ;
And Thou be held, as fast or loose thy thrall,
Socinian here—there Evangelical.

If Thought *will* rise, let Thoughtlessness dispute it ;
A strenuous idler, fiddle it, or flute it ;
Be wise in tulips, learned on a haunch—
Your little Thinker is the truly Staunch ;
Or better—let thy life with deeds be fraught,
Such as heaven loves—but still abstain from Thought !

Beneath the surface of yon level deep
Lurk rifting rocks, and gulping currents sweep.
And what are Creeds, planed down by State Decree,
But the smooth treachery of a summer sea ?
This Leo learned, Rome's Pilot, to his cost,
When half his freight of ancient faith was lost.—

And now, scarce less, a strange horizon lowers,
And Change, His church that wreck'd, may burst on Ours ;
Burst, as of old, like Luther's lightning shock,
The fold half-crush, and dissipate the flock.

Hence more, as earthly meed may seem less sure,
Cleanse we our faith ;—for honest held, if poor.
Soldier, for conscience his good sword who draws,
Should have to boast, at least, a sterling cause.

That scattered creeds shall scarce converge to one,
If observation, century-school'd, have shown ;
As adders deaf to each dogmatic word,
Nor much conciliated by the sword ;

'Twere now as well another course to trim,
 If not for wisdom, merely for the whim ;
 And since Authority so long hath tried,
 And failed at last—take Tolerance for a guide.

But if Authority we needs must have,
 With rod to smite and fetter to enslave ;
 Her let me worship, venerably old,
 Tiara-bound, and vesture starred with gold ;
 And hear—'mid crosses, shrines, her anthems roll,
 And incense breathe, at once, through sense and soul ;
 As tost, in fragrant wreathings, to and fro,
 Amid the pictured dreams it lingers slow
 Of thoughtful Raffaele or vast Angelo. }

Blind wisdom theirs, who bade old Harshness stay,
 And Beauty—half that soothed it—tore away.

—Plain English Scripture doth right well for me ;
 But if its blessed meanings still must be

Read in another's sense—mine strictly bound—
Me then let loftier Latin peal around,
Where antique mass intones its deep delight,
And far tradition rules, in Reason's spite.

Ye Senator-Economists, who plan
Substantial blessings for Elector-man ;
Embodying each your own, or prompter's scheme,
Canal or corn law—currency or steam ;
For one brief hour, these loftier cares at rest,
Weave one poor speech, to plead for Minds Opprest.
Let trade, if so ye deem, unfetter'd be,
But leave the Conscience, like the trader, free.
Tithes—and tithe-proctors, if ye will, control,
But dogmas harsh, not less, that tithe the soul.
Let Charity no more be ruled a sin,
Nor Justice, but by license, smuggled in ;
Nor holy rights of Tolerance left to guess,
But Love, like Hate, by statute taught express.
Disused though long, impeach her not of loss,
But trumpet-sound her, at the public Cross ;

—Yet not for dole, at will withheld, or given,—
But birth-right, like the genial air of heaven.—
If round us yet ancestral rancours throng,
To you, ye Senates, half pertains the wrong ;
—But ill a backward legislation suits,
The law 'twas Orpheus gave, and not the Brutes.

B.—Yet ours is “ Toleration practical ”—

A.—If fit the freedom, why retain the thrall ?
—Rightful our Creed, like ancient Christian men,
Why strained to hide and worship in a den ?
—Why still condemned beneath your sway to pine ?
Speak, Athanasius ! speak, ye Thirty-nine !

Wise is it, thus to bid us weep or laugh ?
Half to perplex and turn to bigot's half ?
While of old disputants on our free sense
Ye harness thus the hates or the pretence,
Ye too, like charioteers who curb and strain,
May chance, when least ye fear, to snap the rein.

Of tangled problems why thus large your list !
Christian to be must each turn casuist ?
By cobweb clues how hard our way to find !
'Tis not with gossamers we lead the blind ;
And, left to hair-split logic's breaking line,
What Theseus-Faith may triumph o'er the mine ?

Your zig-zag ray distracts our straight desire,
Or tempts, like *ignis fatuus*, to the mire ;
Light would ye proffer—let it aid—not mar,
To focus drawn and fixed as polar star,
Nor hard to find, and never kindled hot,
To martyrize dim sight which finds it not.

Thee, Charity, did peace-persuading Paul,
Wisely prefer, the rarest gem of all ;
For Alms he knew, full oft, the gifts of Pride,
And Faith, erewhile, by Selfishness supplied ;
—But thee, of Meekness born, and Self-control,
The very scarcest product of the soul.
In strife apart our other Virtues flee,
When not in sister union held by Thee ;

And, breaking from their old harmonious chime,
Jar, in each other's ears, like Guilt or Crime ;
But where thy presence is, there all the rest
Cluster in Love, and that one spot is blest.

And proofs have been, if ancient tale may move,
Of Faith unconquered and unconquered Love ;
Who, trailed amid the Arena's brutal crew,
Died for belief, and prayed for those who slew ;
And still of these, though much in sooth they fail,
Fragments are found to win us to the tale.
As when some mighty tree hath met the shock
Of storm or axe ; a ruin—or a block ;
Though high in air no more its branches toss,
The wreck remains—to tell how vast it was.

“To tame the proud—the fettered slave to free,
These are imperial arts and worthy thee.”
Allow me, thus, in English phrase to quote,
When “glorious John” translates what Virgil wrote.
Nor ill, in truth, some loftier virtues throw,
When bowed the darkened world to Gentile Jove ;

Nor were long years, ere purer faith was born,
Of household loves and duties all forlorn ;
And every land hath known, since first it saw
Seed cast on furrow, wise restraint of Law ;
—But—Humbled Heart ! that lesson first was given }
In Galilee ; to temper sterner leaven, }
Make Heaven of Earth ; then lead from Earth to Heaven. }

Thence Virtue—not to Action prompted less,—
Yet harder glory won from Passiveness ;
And, peacefully sublime, brooked sweetly, there,
Her doubled task—to Do and to Forbear.

—Oh ! bitter produce of that Christian tree,
For Loving kindness and for Charity !
One sheltering sky—one earth to feed the root—
The Brethren pluck—and Hatred is the fruit !
The pious bandit thus, Abruzzi's son,
His dagger bears and crucifix in one ;
The point full sharp for deeds of blood and guilt,
And our meek Saviour carved upon the hilt.

—With differing optics earth and sky we view,
And what to Me is dark, beams bright to You.
Nay things, the very same to sight confest,
With differing impulse strike upon the breast.
Say then, if Outward Forms,—the plainest speech
Of nature, various aspects yield for each ;
If mountain peak, and forest's deep abyss,
To thee indifferent, mould another's bliss ;
How then may Mere Conceptions, clear far less,
To all alike conveyed, alike impress ?
Of Will, of Thought, the measure who shall find,
Or strain one dogma on each varying mind ?

When from our North the Zephyr-breeze shall blow,
And Tides flow equalised, nor high, nor low ;
On the litho Pard when shows each spot alike,
And with one colour eyes from Beauty strike ;
Then bring the pattern of thy Choosing Wit,
And bid all human race conform to it.

Or rather, as each herb selects from earth
The vital food that fosters best its birth ;

Even so, let Individual Minds drink in
The nurture to their spirit most akin;
Freely by each his own calm progress won,
And—of Faith's "many mansions" found the One.

Then ceaseless why, in village and in town,
'Twixt sect and sect, dispute of up and down?
With secular why mix religious strife,
To add one pang the more to worried life?
If coming worlds at pleasure we divide,
In this why walk not kindly, side by side?
In guild why thus contentious ever meet?
Why thwart our pavement? why not light the street?

B.—But Faith is Will.

A.—So taught Bray's easy Vicar,
And innocently wondered folk should bicker;
—Next, held each stickler-obstinate,—not dim—
Last, hated all, no weathercocks, like him.

—Oh ! milky maxim ! And not his alone,—
Now Metaphysic claims it for his own ;
And having twisted,—doubted,—talked,—his fill—
Decrees, at last, dogmatic, “ Faith is Will.”

—And when the crowd, of old, was clustering thick
Round the last throb of dying Heretic,
Inquisitors, I ween, might well instil
The very self-same maxim, “ Faith is Will.”
—Convenient phrase ! that serves his several turn,
Who wills to flatter, or who wills to burn !
Or saves the brambled foot from thorns that goad,—
Of our Theology the Royal Road !

On crust when Stoic dined, in robe of stuff,
“ Tenacious ! Just ! ” the phrase went well enough ;
But, for a race 'mid silks and clarets cast,
Trite is the maxim, and the mode o'erpast.

To him, who wills a borough or a place ;
To him, who wills a living from His Grace ;

—Wills, for his son, a rich and pious wife ;
 Or, for himself, unpersecuted life :
 Or him, whose heart and brain, tired fairly out,
 Will sweet repose from logic and from doubt ;
 I too, well pleased to thrive and to be still,
 I too, full oft could echo—"Faith is Will"—
 Though checked, as oft, by him, whose honest heart
 To Conscience clings, and spurns the Trimmer's part.

Where varying Creeds diverge, like vista-views,
 In separate lines, and Thought stands free to choose,
 If honest Prejudice oppose some hill
 To block the best—thus far let Faith be will.
 But hold no commune with that Faith polite,
 Which, knowing black for black, would will it white ;
 And taunts each slower creed which dares gainsay,
 Or clasps not yet, *her* option of to-day,
 And feasts with every ~~right~~^{rite} in every grove,
 And veers by turns to Titan and to Jove.

Not Swallows, whom the instinct of the year
 Convenes for flight, with swifter motion veer,

When all the tiny birds in long array
First cloud with cindery wing the clear blue day,
Then, as by signal, suddenly to view
Glance their white breasts and change the squadron's hue.
Not rapid more (to illumine that mighty dome,
"The world's great wonder and e'en thine, oh Rome!"
When loftier festivals their pomp prepare)
The fiery transmutation flames in air.
There, while innumerable eyes on that vast ring
Of tempered lamps, serene as moonbeam cling,
Hands all unseen bright flambeaux toss on high,
And the changed fires flash ruddy round the sky;
—But Faith, I ween, with steadier light should burn,
Nor quite at will, like glancing Swallow, turn.

But where stern statutes summon state-bound men
Old creeds to quit, or—quitting—clasp again,
And sorely-hunted Faith pursuit bemocks
With season-shifted hue, like Arctic fox,
Of such Compliance deem not We quite ill
Though prone it be to mould Belief on Will.

Our Prosperous Faith, unthreatened yet, may frown,
But hard it is to wear the Martyr's crown;
And justly hence high guerdon waits on them,
Who, spite its thorns, have dared that diadem.

Yes, Conscience, thy strong Presence can constrain
To view, with scarce a smile, e'en Southcote's train.
Corrupt their text may be, or weak its gloss,
But Soul Sincere to gold can coin the dross.

Truth's ancient Landmarks, parting Good from Ill,
These well to know nor labour asks nor skill;
Conscience hath writ life's daily duties plain,
Nor lets the Moral vibrate with the Brain;
But Creeds that from ideal regions come,
And 'mid unvisioned objects seek their home,
—Each with some favourite phantasy impress,—
On this they muse or rave, and scorn the rest.
Hence Syria saw her silent Hermits brood,
Hence whirl'd the Priestess 'mid the Delphic wood;
Hence Swedenborg “presumed empyreal air”—
Hence Tongues Prophetic screech in Regent Square.

Calm Reason may deplore such Freaks should be ;
But, if they find their Followers, leave them Free.

Some think a Sabbath feast no grievous sin ;
Some on their Sabbath let no stranger in.
This creed with cheerful dance accords right well,
This deems a pirouette a step for hell.
If sour Geneva bear a Sunday play,
Give we, as mildly, every faith its way ;
For many a Pilgrim Prayer, to Us unknown,
By its own pathway travels to the Throne.

Where mighty congregations throng amain,
And pulpit-thunders shake the astonished fane,
And through far roofs long-volumed organs peal,
There are, who then alone consent to feel.
Others, Shy Souls ! whom silken crowds perplex,
Polemics tire, and Actor-Preachers vex,
Love more, like Hermit, near his cross of stone,
To pace, at eve, the silent turf alone,
And softly breathe, or inly muse, a prayer,
And find, not less, the General Father there.

And whencesoe'er the glow—from Outward Sense,
Or fully fed by Inner Heart intense ;
What wins to love his God and Neighbour best,
Be this, for each, the object and the Test.

“ Built in the eclipse, and rigged with curses dark,”
With Puritan I quarrel not, though stark ;
But let him breast along his Narrow Sea,
Right easy, if he keep but clear of Me.
—Yet some a Sabbath galls, o'er-strictly set,
—As hounds, kept long at walk, in kennel fret—
And then the silent niece, the meek-eyed wife,
Shrink from the prelude growl of coming strife,
As, 'neath the thraldoms of a tedious day,
Strained chords of temper, one by one, give way.
E'en Thou, the saccharine of all week-day men—
Confess, my Friend ! art somewhat acid then.

—Oft too, on minds not abstract quite, nor pure,
Long-stretched devotions that but ill endure,
Slander, who thrives on leisure unemployed,
Slander drops in, to fill the uneasy void ;

And duly makes, if not in holiest guise,
Her Sabbath day, a day of Sacrifice !

Thy Creed, like Country, is thy Birth's, not Thine ;
The unconscious Baptism of some frontier line ;
Swathed round Thee by yon sweep of Mountain
ridge,

Swerved by a Rivulet, changing at a Bridge.

On *this* side or on *that* by hazard thrown,

For regal rights we battle or our own ;

And *here* or *there*, as first we draw our breath,

Theology decrees us Life or Death.

Such, where thou partest with thy ten-yards span

Of Polity and Faith the various man,

Such thoughts, St. Maurice ! to thy Bridge will cling, }
Around its antique arches clustering, }
Calvin and Leo, Landaman and King.* }

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\* ——— " Many a one  
Owes to his country his religion ;  
And in another would as strongly grow,  
Had but his nurse or mother taught him so."

" This, says pious and honest and gentle Izaak Walton, is reason put into verse,  
and worthy the consideration of a wise man."—*Complete Angler*, chap. 2.

Or e'en old Pagan Jove, who first saw thrown  
Those arches o'er thy waters, Rapid Rhone.\*

All that feeds eye and ear—our earliest books,—  
Fond childhood's hill-side walks, and playmate brooks,—  
Tale of old martyr—picture—bust—or song—  
These stoutly chain, or hurry hearts along  
With force than reasonings and than truth more strong. }

Or, if Conviction's guileless sophistry  
Steal in, with kisses, at the Mother's knee;  
'Mid toils, so seeming-slight, yet firmly set,  
What after-growth may struggle with the net?

'Tis thus th' Affections clasp what Faith denies,  
For creed who quits must snap a thousand ties,  
Him tolerate we, whom Conscience strains to stray,  
And him—who simply plods the beaten way.

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\* The gate on the bridge of St. Maurice was, a few years since, the meeting point of three forms of government,—the republic of the Valais, the oligarchy of Berne, and the despotism of Savoy; and of two religions,—a bigoted Popery, and a Calvinism, not, perhaps, less bigoted. Thus a few yards, here or there, made all the difference for life, and, as many no doubt believed and believe, for eternity! The foundations of the bridge are said to be Roman.

*B.*—False or absurd, what, treat all creeds alike ?  
Nor Ridicule to shame, nor Law to strike ?  
’Twere like the man, so fearful, or so civil,  
He burned a taper both to Saint and Devil.

*A.*—False creeds have thriven, e’en when by Laws  
comprest,  
And Ridicule been busy with the best.  
Where creeds no public decencies offend,  
Nor with forced nostrums our poor creeds would mend,  
To pass them gently by is Wisdom’s plan ;  
Let Force sway brutes, but Reason keep for man ;  
Nay deem unsafe with Ridicule to smite ;  
Laughter may err ; but Mercy must be right.

Who Ridicule would make of Truth the test,  
He reasons ill, with moral not the best.  
Our mirth breathes oft-times from no zephyr-coast,  
And seldom is most wise, when keen the most.  
Jester—for jest—Wit asks for cutting sense—  
Heaven’s milder canon bids Benevolence.

As keenest eye, closed in by cramping fence,  
Will lose, or soon or late, its wider sense ;  
So least who knows least feels another's right,  
And Narrow Creed most oft is Narrow Sight.  
—And hence Intolerance, of all her sons,  
For her chief Aide-de-camp most loves a Dunce ;  
Who, like dense Critic on Greek text obscure,  
Still rages most, when least his light is sure,  
And where an Angel's sense might pause in fear,  
Decides at once with statute or with sneer.

Or Bigot shall himself exclude the ray  
From his own crypt, and then denies the day ;  
But while, like fog, He dark and darker grows,  
And o'er all nature his own darkness throws,  
Love, like the bow that curves from yonder Blue,  
Cheers earth and sky, and nobly spans the Two.—

The slowly judging eye—the doubting ear—  
The holy love of truth, the reverent fear—  
The philosophic brain, that loves to scan,  
May make a Sage, but spoil a Partisan.

From struggling sects, such wiselier keep aloof,  
For Zealotry but seldom waits on Proof;  
The All—the None—concedes no ground between,  
And smiles, with bitter scorn, at “Golden Mean.”

But not alone within some cloister's bound,  
Or chapel trim, contracted creed is found.  
At good men's feasts, as where monks diet spare,  
The harsh, exclusive heart is everywhere.  
The Libertine, whose nights, whose every day,  
Wild orgies whelm of pleasure or of play;  
When Apoplexy, his first visit, knocks,  
Or Palsy helps, unasked, to shake the box;  
E'en he, at once, with new-born zeal is wroth,  
For Ignorance and Vice turn bigots both.

Go! go! Thou frightened Neophyte and learn  
This wiser creed and milder truth discern.  
Where Penitence takes counsel but from Fear,  
Tho' in heaven's track—to heaven she comes not near.  
Back to the path, whence first we turned aside,  
'Tis frank Regret—'tis loving Hope must guide;

But up the Steep and thro' the Eternal Gate  
No Penitence may pass which leagues with Hate.  
The "Joy in Heaven" is over them alone  
Who curse no Neighbour's sin, but weep Their Own.

Little to know the lot of fervent Youth,  
Yet deem that little All—undoubted truth.  
For him each boundary line is coloured strong,  
And all is fiercely right, or fiercely wrong.  
Nor ill on Youthhood sits that generous rage,  
But let a wiser tolerance wait on Age.  
Firm on himself the rule of Strictness press'd,  
Each mild Exception keep he for the rest ;  
Through many a meditation trained to know,  
How little sure our guesses here below ;  
Through many a moral conflict, viewed or striven,  
Taught, ere he die, "Forgive to be Forgiven."

In the Brain's chambers, as the Heart's deep frame,  
How oft is error, that which vice we name !  
And hopes—for Virtue—thoughts—for Truth—that try,  
How oft, by strange refractions, swerved awry !

When Timour ravaged realms, in fierce delight,  
His dream was Providence, and Fated Right.  
When Ganges chokes some aged parent's breath,  
'Tis Filial Love prepares the work of death.  
Their falsest Creed, some Truth ill understood :  
Their Foulest Act, some Misdirected Good.

In minds, as nature, 'tis my doctrine still,  
The Good is essence, accident the Ill ;  
And deeds, that win from virtue least consent,  
More oft o'erselfish than malevolent.  
To this, 'mid Virtue's wreck, I grapple fast,  
And cling in hope, like sailor to the mast.

Mark, with observant eye, the inferior kinds,  
Through all their tribes how fondest instinct winds.  
Drink in of Infancy the answering smile,  
Ere petty passions touch it, to defile.  
Hear Youth his glorious aspirations roll,  
Ere worldliness steal in, to taint the soul.  
Of Manhood test the basest, earthliest leaven,  
And feelings mingle there might mix with heaven.



These—not ascetic dogmas that degrade—  
Shall teach to love the beings God hath made,  
And—glorious fruitage from a noble stem—  
Lead on to love the God, who made, through Them !

Who asks allegiance, as from heaven addrest,  
On sympathies akin to heaven must rest.  
Build Faith on fancies fine, or matter brute,  
Your subtilties we slight—your facts dispute.  
Reasonings may cheat us, if they soar or plod,  
But God is Love, and Love the test of God.

When He with primal love bade hearts o'erbrim,  
'Twas not alone mankind to love—but Him.  
He gave us faith, in Him—th' Unseen—to trust,  
He gave us justice, Him to adore—the Just.  
Less to the senses spake than souls of men\*,  
And now would teach us, as he taught us then.

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\* " And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek a sign ?"—Mark, ch. viii. ver. 12. A most pregnant text, on which, in its application to general truth and to our own actual theology, a volume might be written.

And when best logic's best-forged links decay,  
And e'en foundation-facts dissolve away ;  
—Such logic as, perchance, Aquinas drew  
From facts, which sifting Brown for errors knew—  
(For truths undoubted, of one age the text,  
Are oft the scouted falsehoods of the next)—  
Faith then shall find in heart from hates aloof,  
Her holiest hope and grasp her firmest proof.

Such Faith be mine ! Earth-lover, yet with wings  
To soar above the abyss of mortal things ;  
And, if through doubtful skies sent forth to roam,  
With thought on Love still turned—Her ark and home.

Fade tangible and visible combined,  
She lives, while conscience lives and mind is mind.  
Let Mutability through systems roll,  
She still is here, the Witness in the soul ;  
And here, eternal as in heaven, shall stand,  
In tabernacle never made with hand !

Instructors bland ! your memories ne'er shall cease,

Who teach us Wisdom, when ye teach us Peace ;  
Who win to think, and prize each thought that flows  
O'er gentler hearts, from "meanest flower that blows ;"  
And—our World's Book thus mildly understood—  
Find your own solace in a Creed of Good.

Walton ! who long in busy city pent,  
Yet most, 'mid streams and fields fulfilled his bent ;  
Benign of spirit ; and, though Simple Sage ;  
How fondly have I turned his quiet page ;  
And led by sedgy Lea, or clearer Dove,  
Inhaled, with him, the very breath of Love.

And me, if since, in ne'er forgotten hour,  
That Lore of Love hath stirr'd with deeper power ;  
And taught yet keener glow—with wider aim—  
Nature's own Priest, 'twas Wordsworth fed the Flame.

*B.*—Circle of Tolerance if thus vast you draw,  
Useless our hulks ! and every sage of law !  
Of idlesse shall each Midas feel the strain,  
And Sidney Cove her pilgrims crave in vain.

*A.*—If Crime she find, let Law just vengeance take,  
But Crime of Creed—she doth not find, but make ;  
Like *Æsop's* wolf, who marked the lamb for prey,  
Herself the Guilt invents ; then turns to slay.  
But He, each inner motive wise to scan,  
Shall look with kindlier glance on erring man,  
And, though the Lictor smite, refrain His rod ;  
For Tolerance, earth-rejected, dwells with God.

Pilots of Good ! who guide o'er farthest seas,  
Untired, our Bible-laden argosies ;  
To where, by populous Ganges, weed-like thrown,  
The poor dejected Paria pines alone ;  
Or where, 'mid Polynesia's seas of blue,  
Some island Seer proclaims his stern Taboo ;  
For these, with generous haste, unload your freight,  
Our Faith, our Morals,—all—except our Hate.  
By Indian streams, beneath Australian skies,  
Countless as stars, ere long, our Fanes shall rise,  
And white-robed Hopes each altar beam above ;  
But lay their first foundations deep in Love.

So shall your task be hailed indeed Divine,  
And Heber's gentlest spirit bless each shrine.

I, in their turn, have known each various crew  
Of all the sects, that ever Evans drew,  
At morning meetings joined each gathering host,  
And pledged at dinner many a dismal toast.  
True, when I heard each straining leader teach  
Of heights exclusive, all assumed to reach;  
Left far behind all stretch of sympathy,  
Beating the wing, in vain, to soar so high,  
My grosser essence, all unused to bear  
The tingling of those Alpine regions rare,  
Dropt gladly down to breathe in common air;  
To tread my own calm valley-paths again,  
And talk of simple Creeds, with simple Men.

Yet as the traveller, who some lofty brow  
Hath reached, whence spreads his journey past below,  
Enough perceives to know how turned aside  
His erring steps, if not henceforth to guide;

So I—well marked each controversial tribe—  
Each race that will not, or that will, subscribe—  
Calvinists—Lutherans—Socinians—All—  
High-Church—Low-Church,—and Evangelical;—  
Conflicting tenets, each by each abhorred,  
The other each to hate their sole accord ;  
Observed—how this asserts what that denies,  
One takes the extreme, another qualifies ;  
Or, veering round, by turns affirms—retracts—  
Now swerved by fancies—steady now on facts ;  
What tangled strifes contending sects provoke,  
The snow-white surplice, or Geneva cloak ;—  
If but t' asperge the new-born babe of sin,  
Or plunge the full grown Baptist fairly in ;—  
How firmly this on Two—this leans on Seven—  
Yet, right or wrong, in earnest All for heaven ;—  
I may not dare pronounce man's proper creed  
So full in light, " that he who runs may read."—  
Can own a Stray may honestly be out,  
Nor quite would damn a Brother for a Doubt.

Instincts there are, I know, that rise and cleave,  
Wind round the heart, and bind it to believe ;  
And Doctrines, such as early lore imparts,  
And sheds, like morning dew, on Infant Hearts,  
When o'er her lisping babe the Mother stands,  
And moulds his prayer, and joins his little hands.  
Yet these, Guides only for the straightway road,  
That humbly leads, through duty, up to God ;  
But blind and helpless for the dangerous lee  
Of wide theology's unfathomed sea ;  
These all desert the wretch, who hangs, perplex'd,  
On the dark comment and the doubtful text ;  
Doomed, for his sins, to drift, and drive through all,  
Mad or inspired, from Brothers up to Paul,  
And force him, long by winds of doctrine blown,  
To seize the helm—and work a course his own.

Oh Friend, be ours, of softer metal wrought,  
To rock us in the creed each mother taught !  
To others left the controversial leaf ;  
By others reaped its triumphs—and its grief !

Is it a boon, repose of soul to quit,  
For all the pride of logic and of wit ?  
And, too vain-glorious for quiescent state,  
Mix fiercely in dispute and learn to hate ?

Is it a boon, when Love's and Friendship's voice  
Call thee with them to trust and to rejoice,  
Like some far planet thy lone course to wheel,  
Nor feel, nor hope what others hope and feel.

When village-groups, for sabbath worship drest,  
Throng the green churchyard where their Fathers rest,  
And mourners, bending o'er the precious dust,  
Win solace from the Bliss that waits the Just—  
Is it a boon to approach that house of prayer,  
And feel thy footstep hath “no business there ;”  
To kneel thee, where thy boyhood knelt—and then  
Weep in thy heart Thou “canst not say Amen !”

Vainly with Guilt when groaning Virtue strives,  
And, but in Heaven, not one sad hope survives ;



Is it a boon thou, Knowledge, hast conferred,  
 To deem the strife unmarked, the groan unheard ?  
 Ourselves to deem mere Atoms, random-hurled,  
 The Orphans of an Unregarded World ?  
 And 'mid the body's, 'mid the soul's distress,  
 To clutch our utmost Hope—from Hopelessness ?

Is it a boon, when Dissolution's strife  
 Hangs—trembling—o'er the bed of Child or Wife ;  
 And the fond Sufferer turns amid her pain,  
 And looks, and strives to say, " We meet again ;"  
 Is it a boon to stand in anguish by,  
 And meet with some lip-phrase that clinging eye,  
 While the sad Sceptic Heart makes no reply ?  
 Then, bending o'er the tomb to which she sank,  
 Present to feel—and Future—one mere Blank ?

Oh ! thou from Faith's mild bondage sadly free,  
 " Lone mariner, upon a shoreless sea ; "  
 Oh ! say, thou deeply wounded Child of Doubt,  
 Thus, in thy solitude of soul, shut out

From Nature's fondest, holiest sympathies,  
Doth Knowledge—(vaunt it Knowledge)—pay for this?

Thee shall some Guiding Instinct's mild behest  
Yet turn in season to the appointed nest.  
On ever-questing wing 'twere hard to go,  
For surer All we Feel than all we Know !

Hence Thou—though logic-mailed, shalt not disdain  
Philosophy !—that mild enthusiast train ;  
Spirits, by nature's thousand harmonies  
That touched, respond ; and, without reasonings, wise, }  
Find types for faith, in earth—and sea—and skies. }

Malvern—I love to track in thought, e'en now,  
Our twilight path along thy turfy brow,  
That tinted—oh ! how fair ! by Hallowing Even,  
Rose, like a ladder step, 'twixt Earth and Heaven.  
Eastward, o'er sunless valley, far beneath,  
Wan shadows crept, our Human Vale of death ;  
While beamed, soft radiant, in the mellow west,  
Mute as we gazed, the Mansions of the Blest !

Who, placed on that far-grasping promontory,  
Not thus had imaged out life's Two-fold Story ?  
Or Who, beneath that sweet and silent air,  
Not worshipped—as Our Spirits worshipped there ?

But art Thou of those searching minds, in sooth,  
That track, through Thought alone, the vein of truth ?  
A keen and subtile Intellect, yet stout  
To drag Conviction from the depths of Doubt ?  
Then delve ; but from thy toil keep pride apart ;  
And link to the Stern Brain a Trusting Heart.

So shalt thou reach Belief.—Not the mere Note,  
Stale from some Teacher's tongue, and caught by rote ;  
Nor Dogma, from the forehead of a Dunce  
That springs, his Pallas, cap-a-pee at once ;  
Nor love-taught Faith, as Knighthood fierce to start,  
When Beauty smiles Belief into the heart \* ;  
And prompt, not less, let wrinkles—frowns—succeed,  
To start, a Ready Reereant, from the Creed ;

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\* “ When Love could teach a monarch to be wise,  
And gospel light first beamed from Dullen's eyes.”—*Fragment of Gray*.

Not such Bold Trust, as Convict Wretches snatch  
 From desperate need of heaven's uplifted latch,  
 Whom Ghostly Comforters so cleanse—or paint—  
 Not one but dies, at least, a Three days' Saint ;  
 Nor yet the dim assent from Anguish wrung,  
 From feeble signs scarce gleaned, or faltering tongue,  
 When speechless Palsy hangs the helpless head,  
 Or low Delirium plucks the dying bed ;—  
 For when no Instinct of our vital Whole,  
 Nor early Lesson, woven with the soul,  
 Carefully, then, to concentration wrought  
 By the slow process of alembic Thought,  
 Belief is toil of Brain ; 'tis Labour's dower,  
 Reared painfully, thro' frost—and sun—and shower,  
 And the slow growth of many a ripening hour,  
 That, like the Aloe's blossom, long to come,  
 Yet comes at last, and bears Immortal Bloom.

Thrice happy He, who—Conqueror at length,—  
 On such calm height repairs his woary strength ;

And, more and more, sees darkness rolled away,  
Till the full prospect brightens into day.  
Yet—not for this, inflate' with new-born pride,  
Looks he with scorn on all the world beside ;  
But downward casts benignant glances o'er  
The minds that stray, where his had strayed before,  
And hopes, and prays for All, before that Throne,  
Where Knowledge—Goodness—Intellect are One.

And what though Some, not shunning to be taught,  
Nay thirsty for the truth, yet find it not ;  
Like fainting travellers, through Arabian sand,  
Where the shy fount still mocks the searching hand,  
Condemned to tread the Doubter's dreary way,  
To the last tinge of life's descending day.  
Yet, e'en for these,—the Spirit bold and rude,  
And all the irreverent Heat of Youth subdued,—  
Slow rolling years at length have done their part,  
While, from the Husband's and the Father's heart,  
New feelings, household interests, budding out—  
If not supplanting, yet o'ershadowing Doubt—

Produce, at length, the calm submitted mind,  
That Past and Present scans with will resigned,  
And onward pondering o'er the dark Untrod,  
In humblest acquiescence rests on God.

And yet, such Faith though God perhaps permit,  
Nor Church, nor Conventicle, deem it fit.  
No sheltering niche have they for trembling Doubt ;  
Or true, or false, the Creed must still be stout.  
Pledged to some Sect—less matter what that one—  
But woe betide the Wretch that herds with none.

Each hath his own Prophetic Dream, I wis.—  
His mad Millennium Scheme—and mine is This !  
A greater than the old Saturnian birth  
Shall come, when, o'er this vexed and vexing earth  
Tolerance her wing shall spread, like Parent Dove,  
And Faith be but another word for Love ;  
And Conscience, on no synods forced to wait,  
Herself perform the work of Sect and State.

In thought I see the Destined Years unfold,  
The Blissful Reign for eager earth foretold.  
Lo ! there the Few—by grateful nations loved—  
The More—by man unmarked—by heaven approved—  
Some Oberlin—but to his village known ;  
Some Titus, beaming virtue from a throne ;  
Minds with each hue of every faith imbued,  
Like but in this—all followers of the Good.—  
Here Bramin—there the Worshipper of Fire—  
Mild Pagan here—there holy Christian sire—  
From every Age and Cline—a beauteous band—  
Priests—Sages—Bards—they wander hand in hand ;  
In tranquil converse quest for Truth Alone,  
Nor chafe, though each believe that Truth his own ;  
Of rival creeds shake off the Hate or Fear,  
And—wondrous ! love more nearly, as more near ;  
Oft pondering, 'mid that strangely-peaceful scene,  
How Theologic Hates had ever been !

*B.*—Translated hence to some Angelic Sphere,  
Such Tolerance we may meet, but hardly here.

Meanwhile, like thee who rambles in discourse,  
Must for Utopian pass, if not for worse.

*A.*—Utopian ! 'tis a sneer I heed not much ;  
And—for what worse—confound not me with such.  
Through Stranger-paths but little prone to range,  
I keep the old, and leave, who will, to change ;  
But taught the Gospel came, that strifes should cease,  
Deem, like Moravian, its best lesson—Peace ;  
On harder doctrines lean, in quiet trust,  
And leave polemic folios—in their dust ;—  
But this point hold—howe'er each sect may brawl, }  
Where pure the life, where free the Heart from gall, }  
Whate'er the Creed, Heaven looks with Love on All ! }

THE END.



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